

Preparing Students for an AI-Driven Workforce

CACTE 2026



Presenters

Christy Biedron

Director of Education, Junior Achievement – Rocky Mountain

Lisa Hollingsworth

Mapleton School District

Early Career Prep Internship Coordinator





39% of skillsets will be outdated in 5 years

due to the rapid introduction of AI and automation.

**Today's technologies could
theoretically automate
more than half
of current US work hours.**



Today's Session:

- Gain insight into the future of work, locally and globally
- Explore how AI is disrupting workplaces and how companies are using it
- Discuss strategies that ensure your students are prepared and confident to take on the challenges and opportunities of today and the future.





Workforce Insights



Unlock human advantage by redesigning work around AI

AI is reshaping work at every level. While most organizations currently focus on personal productivity, leaders are rebuilding processes, roles, and career paths around expanded AI capabilities.

The most successful organizations reimagine jobs to seamlessly combine human strengths and AI capabilities, ensuring both aspects are used to their fullest potential. New roles—AI operations managers, human-AI interaction specialists, quality stewards, and others—signal a deeper shift: AI is now a structural component of how work is organized. Advanced organizations streamline workflows that AI can execute end-to-end, while humans focus on judgment, exception handling, and strategic oversight. The goal isn't

to replace humans or merely assist them, but to create complementary working relationships between humans and AI, in which the combined output exceeds what either could achieve alone.

Organizational structures are beginning to flatten as AI absorbs routine execution tasks. Some companies are merging technology and people-leadership functions to ensure that systems and workforce design evolve together. The pace varies by industry, but the direction is consistent: Roles, skills, and career paths should be rebuilt, not simply adjusted. Organizations should take an AI-native approach and redesign work holistically rather than layering AI onto legacy processes.

Companies are focused on building AI fluency instead of redesigning work around AI

Within a year, more than a third of surveyed companies (36%) expect at least 10% of their jobs to be fully automated. The majority of surveyed companies (82%) expect at least 10% of their jobs to be fully automated when looking out three years.

These changes require careful thinking about career pathways. Leaders in the qualitative interviews expressed concerns about potential disruption to professional development pipelines as a result of automation. Entry-level jobs involving data entry, reconciliation, and first-level customer support at their companies are being prioritized for automation, but these jobs are often the starting point for longer careers. Organizations will likely need to develop alternate pathways for professional advancement, ensuring that employees have expertise that includes foundational processes.



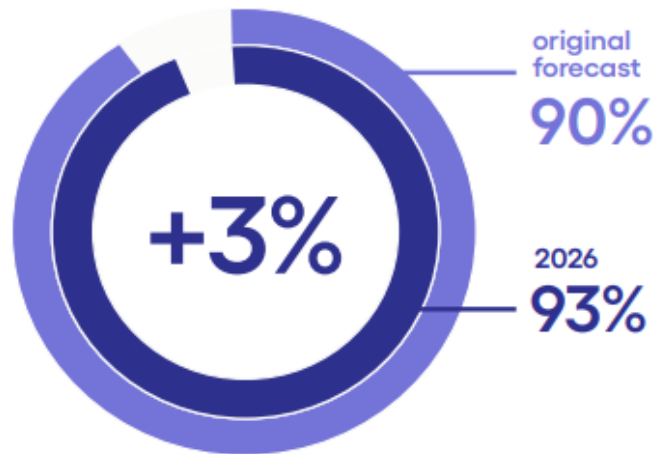
36% of surveyed companies expect at least 10% of their jobs to be fully automated within a year.

Our 10-year forecast is happening today

Across the board, AI-driven change is both more extensive and happening more quickly than anticipated.

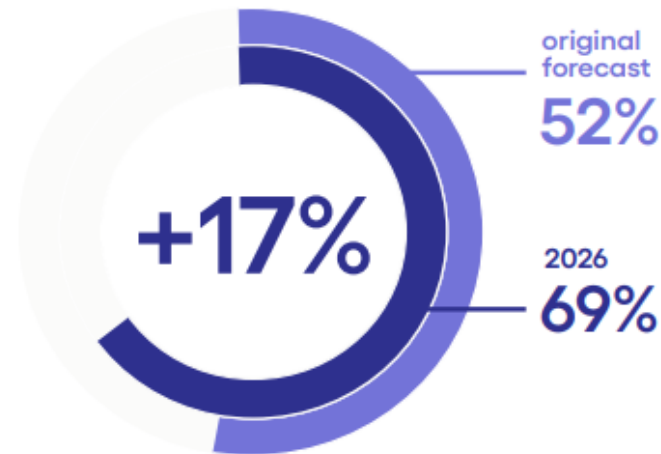
Jobs impacted in some way by AI:

Exposure scores of at least 5%



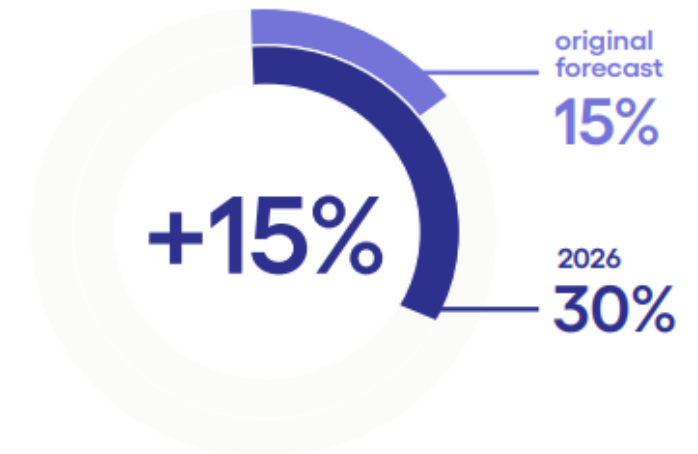
Jobs significantly impacted:

Exposure scores of at least 25%



Jobs facing existential change:

Exposure scores of at least 50%



Cognizant: Jobs experiencing the fastest surge in AI exposure

Roles dominated by manual-labor tasks

Once considered a safe haven from AI disruption, many jobs requiring a great degree of physical labor now show significantly higher exposure scores compared with our original research, along with unexpectedly fast velocity.

In construction, for example, AI can now help with interpreting blueprints. In transportation, it can inspect shipments or conduct safety reviews. The idea that a car mechanic or plumber can put on a pair of AI-augmented glasses to assist in locating a faulty engine part or leaking pipe is now far from science fiction.

Decision-making roles

Managerial and supervisor jobs are now increasingly exposed due to the emergence of agentic AI. Previously, these roles were more insulated from disruption because they involve complex coordination and judgment. Agentic AI alters this dynamic by moving beyond analysis to execution.

Where managers once spent significant time allocating resources, monitoring project status or triaging workflows, autonomous agents can now orchestrate these duties. Project managers, for example, could rely on agents to autonomously schedule meetings, reallocate budget based on spend patterns and chase status updates by leveraging tools they are integrated with.

Hyper-specialized sectors

Such as healthcare, education and law. In these sectors, AI has quickly moved from assisting with low-level tasks to automating more complex tasks that are critical to the role.

For instance, AI is revolutionizing healthcare by improving diagnostic accuracy and supporting patient care. In education, it can facilitate student assessment and classroom discussions. In law, it can analyze probable outcomes and assist with contract negotiations.



Changes in AI Capabilities

- **Multimodal AI:** Can "see" and understand images, diagrams, video, and physical spaces. It can check a design layout, spot defects on a manufacturing line, or review construction photos to see how far along a job site is.
- **Expanded AI reasoning:** Can tackle complex cognitive activities like planning, forecasting, and diagnostic problem-solving.
- **Agentic AI:** Can carry out multi-step tasks on its own. Research suppliers, place an order, and confirm the delivery, checking in with a person only when needed.

Percent of tasks classified as
"fully automatable"

1%

Original

10%

Today

Percent of tasks that are
partially or mostly assistable

15%

Original

40%

Today

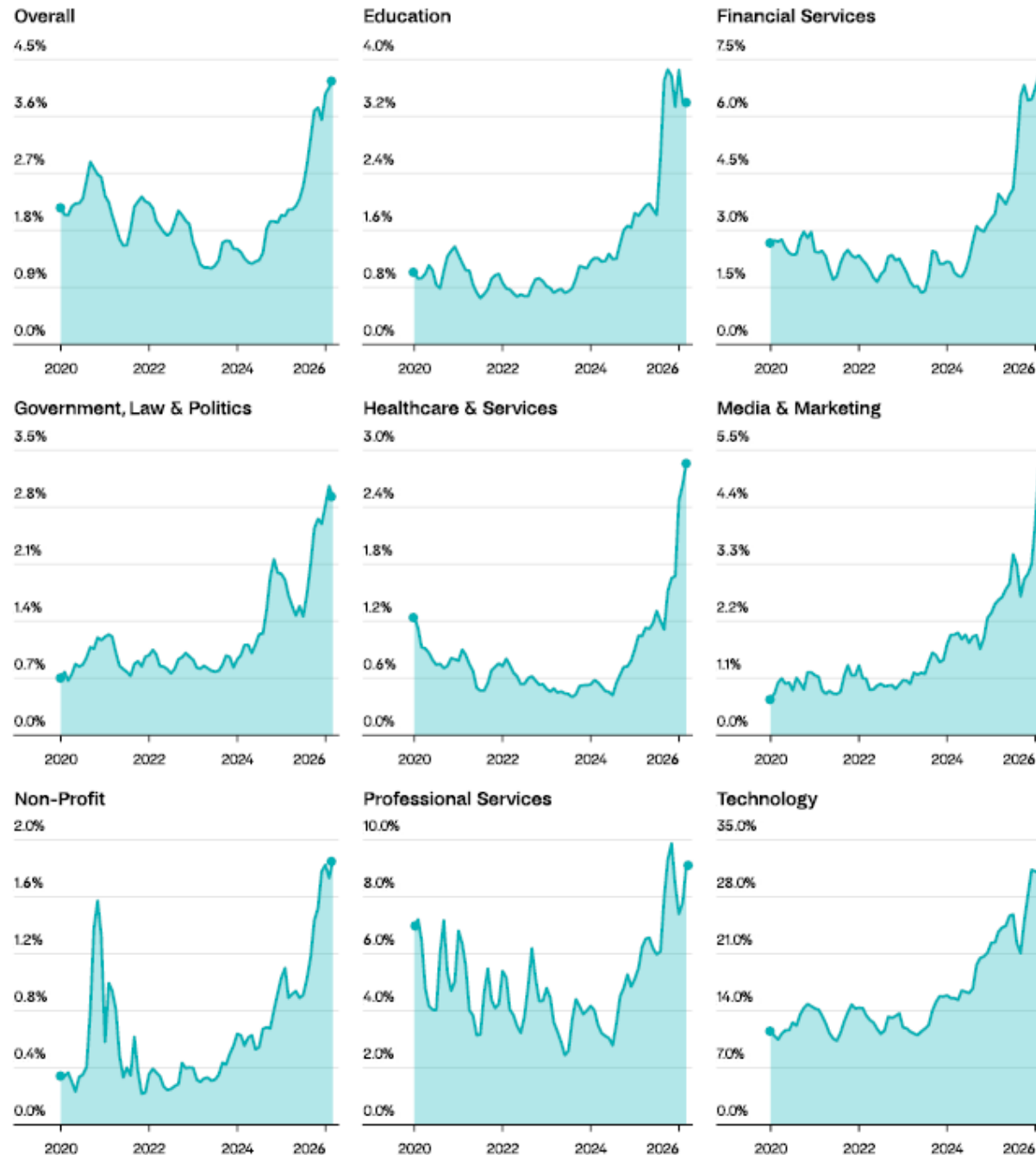


Shifts by Industry Sector

Employer AI Demand

Full-time jobs posted to Handshake that mention AI from July 2025 to March 2026

Source: AI and the Workforce Ahead, Handshake report, April 2026



Agriculture

February 2026: An interdisciplinary research team at Colorado State University is using artificial intelligence to help farmers better understand soil health by turning varied agricultural data into practical, decision-ready insights that are easy to access.

“The data we will be using to train these AI-informed models is both diverse and voluminous. That makes it a challenge to work with, but by combining information from traditional observations or on-the-ground records provided directly by farmers with data collected remotely by satellites, we hope to address gaps in understanding.” – CSU Professor Shrideep Pallickara



Agriculture

- ***Precision Agriculture Specialists*** (AI-Enabled) use a suite of AI-powered drones, sensors, and GPS mapping tools to optimize crop yields, monitor soil health, and reduce waste.
- ***Agricultural Data Analysts*** help farmers make informed decisions, interpret data to identify risk factors, and forecast yields.
- ***Farm Automation Technicians*** specialize in the installation, operation, and troubleshooting of robotic machinery, automated irrigation systems, and AI-driven harvesting equipment.
- ***Sustainable Agriculture Consultants*** with knowledge in AI-powered soil monitoring, resource management tools, and environmental science assist farms in adopting eco-friendly practices. They advise on strategies for reducing carbon footprint while maintaining strong profitability.

<https://farmonaut.com/blogs/10-agriculture-jobs-top-ai-agriculture-jobs-in-2026>

Public Safety

- Emerging AI tools automate routine tasks, shifting public safety roles toward advanced analysis and strategic decision-making, requiring greater technological literacy.
- Employers increasingly prioritize skills like data interpretation, cybersecurity, and adaptive problem-solving alongside traditional public safety competencies.
- Automation may reduce entry-level positions but creates new specialization and advancement opportunities, fostering career stability through continuous upskilling.



Skilled Trades

- Jobs that require physical dexterity, on-site presence, and real-world problem solving remain largely insulated from AI disruption. Electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians, construction managers, and manufacturing supervisors are seeing steady demand growth driven by infrastructure investment and an aging workforce.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 8-12% job growth for skilled trades through 2032, outpacing the overall labor market average of 3%. These roles combine physical skill, real-world problem-solving, and on-site presence — exactly the capabilities where AI has the least to offer.



Skilled Trades

AI can help tradespeople focus on what really matters: their trade.

- AI can streamline planning, assist with repetitive administrative tasks, and help tradespeople adhere to codes and standards.
- Cosmetologists use AI for virtual client consultations, analyze trends, automate business tasks, and optimize marketing.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) found that fully 95% of fire, electrical, and line safety professionals believe that AI has a purpose in at least some day-to-day job functions in their work. Over half (64%) reported better workflows and collaboration among their teams since implementing digital tools.

October 2025 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcperna/2025/10/14/how-ai-is-changing-skilled-trades-work-for-the-better/>



Healthcare and Biotechnology

AI is accelerating drug discovery, diagnostics, and personalized medicine, but it's humans who interpret results, make treatment decisions, and manage patient care.

The fastest-growing healthcare roles in 2026:

- **Bioinformatics scientists** — Analyzing genomic data with AI tools to accelerate research
- **Clinical data managers** — Ensuring the quality and compliance of data used in AI-assisted clinical trials
- **Health AI integration specialists** — Implementing AI tools in clinical settings while maintaining patient safety and regulatory compliance
- **Telehealth coordinators** — Managing the infrastructure and workflows of AI-augmented remote care

Healthcare is notable because AI is creating more jobs than it's displacing. The technology enables new types of care (remote monitoring, predictive diagnostics, personalized treatment plans) that require human oversight and patient interaction.



Business and Marketing

Digital literacy and AI skills are fast becoming non-negotiables for today's marketer. Up to 4 in 5 employers now prioritize hiring AI-skilled talent, including:

- **Data Literacy and Analytics:** The ability to quickly read and synthesize analytic information on various tools, as well as AI outputs, is a critical skill in today's data-driven environment.
- **Generative AI Tool Proficiency:** Using generative AI tools to scale content production while maintaining quality standards and company privacy is essential for marketers creating campaigns in 2026 and beyond.
- **Creativity and Storytelling:** Creative human oversight is crucial for providing the context that ensures AI-powered content is aligned with a brand's voice, tone, and strategic goals. The ability to craft meaningful brand stories using AI as a creative partner will be extremely valuable as more marketers look to automate content outputs.
- **Ethical and Regulatory Awareness:** Understanding how to use AI in an ethical way that prioritizes data security, regulatory compliance across different industries, and cultural sensitivity is gaining momentum as an irreplaceable skill for organizations that are embracing all forms of AI.

Media Arts

- Routine tasks are becoming automated, requiring professionals to focus on creative problem-solving and strategic content development.
- Employers increasingly seek skills in AI integration, data literacy, and cross-disciplinary collaboration, reflecting the merging of technology with traditional media arts competencies.
- Automation impacts career stability by shifting demand toward niche specializations, while also expanding advancement opportunities for those adapting to evolving technological landscapes.

Employment projections reveal that jobs in digital content creation and multimedia production are set to grow by 13% over the next decade-significantly faster than the average across all occupations. This surge stems from expanding online platforms and increasing demand for immersive media experiences.

July 2026 <https://research.com/advice/ai-automation-and-the-future-of-media-arts-degree-careers>

Engineering

JULY 22, 2026 / BY EMILIE RUSCH

Mines selected for 2 Genesis Mission projects to apply AI to critical mineral exploration, nuclear energy



The Task Displacement Model

How a marketing manager's job has changed between 2024 and 2026

Task	2024 Approach	2026 Approach
Writing first-draft copy	Human writer (2-3 hours)	AI-generated, human-edited (30 min)
A/B test analysis	Human in spreadsheets (1 hour)	AI-automated with human review (10 min)
Campaign strategy	Human with basic analytics	Human with AI scenario modeling and predictive analytics
Stakeholder communication	Human (core task)	Human (unchanged — relationship-dependent)
Budget allocation	Human with basic tools	AI-recommended allocation, human-approved
Audience segmentation	Manual analysis (2-3 hours)	AI-generated segments, human-validated (20 min)
Competitive analysis	Manual research (4-6 hours)	AI-compiled briefs, human-interpreted (1 hour)



The workforce of the future will be a partnership of people, agents, and robots.



Accenture:

**Real value shows up when
people and technology
advance together.**

Accenture Research Report: Talent Reinventors, March 16, 2026
<https://www.accenture.com/content/dam/accenture/final/accenture-com/document-4/Accenture-Talent-Reinventors-Report.pdf#zoom=40>



Hybrid Roles: 1/3 of Workforce

- People–agent roles, which include teachers, engineers, and financial specialists whose work could be enhanced by digital and AI tools. These pay an average of \$74,000.
- People–robot roles, found in maintenance and construction, involve machines that add strength and precision to human efforts. About 81 percent of these work hours involve physical tasks, and annual pay averages \$54,000.
- People–agent–robot roles, found in transportation, agriculture, and food service, combine all three forms of labor in roughly equal measure. About 43 percent of the work hours involve physical tasks, and annual pay averages \$60,000.



Reimagining solar operations.

Illustrative workflow: Facility inspection and repair

AI-powered drone

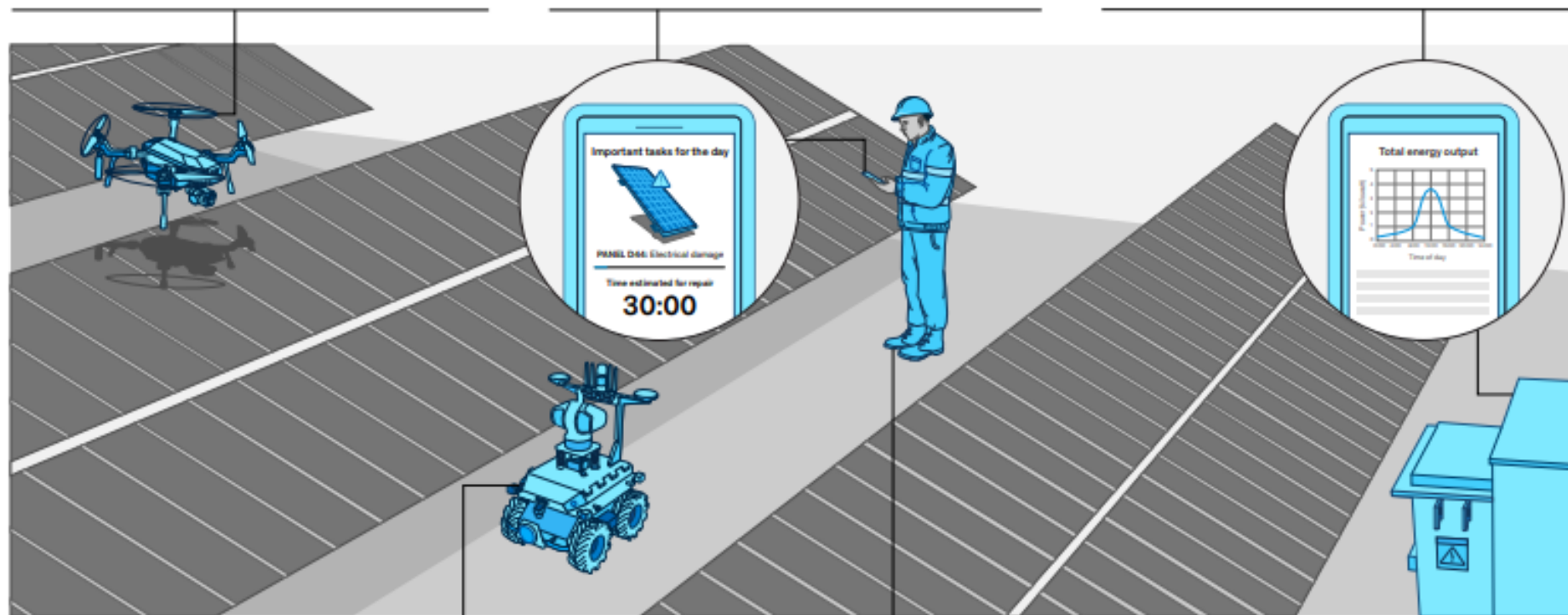
Performs visual and thermal inspections to identify faults, soiling, and other anomalies, sharing insights and data with field technicians, AI agents, and other robots.

AI-powered agent, system performance

Monitoring system health 24/7 using data from robots and sensors. Predicts component failures and recommends maintenance schedules for robots and field technicians.

AI-powered agent, energy optimization

Optimizes generation and grid interaction in real time. Automates decisions about when to store or dispatch power and schedule maintenance to maximize efficiency.



AI-powered rover

Cleans panels, removes vegetation, and performs minor mechanical repairs. Operates mostly autonomously, reporting progress to AI agents and field technicians.

Field technician

Oversees AI agents and robots, validating diagnostics and handling complex repairs. Coordinates maintenance plans, trains robots through demonstration, and ensures safety, compliance, and performance across all systems.

Redesigning building materials store operations.

Illustrative workflow: Order fulfillment and handling

AI-powered agent, inventory management

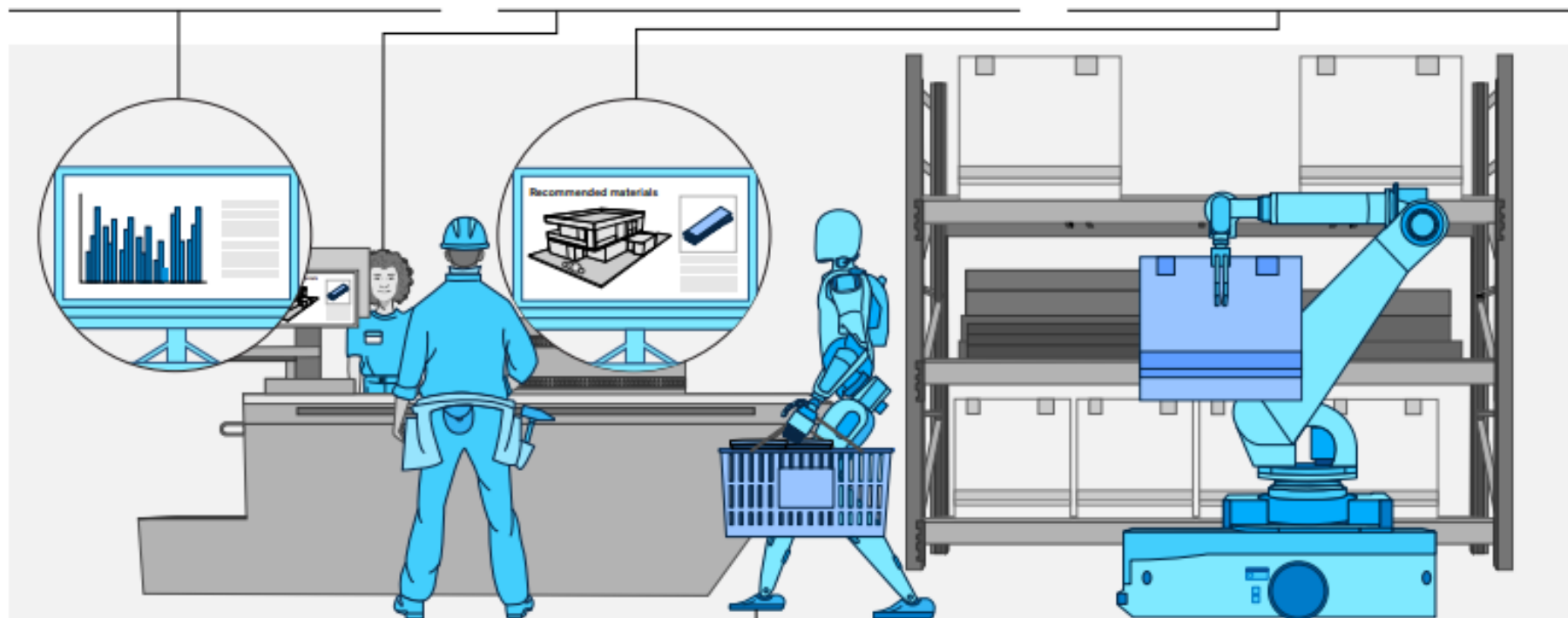
Manages real-time inventory data, including proactively coordinating with suppliers, managing restocks, and scheduling logistics.

Store manager

Leads customer engagement by building relationships, understanding project goals, and providing tailored advice on material selection—supported by insights from AI agents.

AI-powered agent, personalized recommendations

Analyzes design specifications, budget constraints, and client objectives to generate optimal material recommendations and project plans.



AI-powered humanoid

Autonomously retrieves smaller items—like paints, tools, and brushes—to the store front, assisting both staff and customers in locating and moving materials.

AI-powered mobile manipulator

Safely transports heavy materials like wooden panels and packages from the warehouse to the customer pickup area or vehicle.



Skills For an AI-Driven Workforce

2025 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report

Most Prevalent Essential Skills through Colorado Online Job Postings (January 2024–June 2025)

In order to measure and highlight the most prevalent essential skills through Colorado online job postings, an analysis was conducted of recent statewide data collected by Lightcast between January 2024 and June 2025. This analysis spanned Colorado job postings in all 22 major occupational groups and quantified which essential skills were most frequently mentioned by employers within those online job postings. Figure 32 displays the top 15 essential skills identified within Colorado online job postings across all major occupational groups. These are the human skills and competencies most valued by Colorado employers when they are looking to fill a position.

The top essential skill identified was communication, followed by management and customer service. Operations, detail oriented, leadership, and problem solving were the next most frequent essential skills mentioned within Colorado online job postings in 2024 and 2025. The remaining top essential skills are diverse and include broad abilities, such as oral and written communication (writing, English language, and interpersonal communication); critical thinking (planning and coordinating); working with people (sales and professionalism); and physical strength (lifting ability). While this list is in no way exhaustive in presenting the type of essential skills employers seek in their prospective employees, it shows the consistencies observed throughout a wide array of online job postings.

Figure 32

Top 15 Essential Skills Identified Within Colorado Online Jobs Postings Across All Major Occupational Groups, January 2024 to June 2025
[Accessible data for Figure 32](#)

Rank	Essential Skill
1	Communication
2	Management
3	Customer Service
4	Operations
5	Detail Oriented
6	Leadership
7	Problem Solving
8	Lifting Ability
9	Writing
10	Sales
11	English Language
12	Planning
13	Interpersonal Communications
14	Coordinating
15	Professionalism

Source: Lightcast; author calculations and analysis.

Comparing Similarities in Essential Skills Between Online Job Postings and Individual Profiles

[Accessible data for Figure 33](#)

Broad Ability	Online Job Postings	Individual Profiles
Critical Thinking	Detail Oriented; Planning ; Problem Solving; Research ; Troubleshooting	Planning ; Research ; Strategic Planning; Time Management; Troubleshooting
Oral and Written Communication	Communication ; English Language; Interpersonal Communications; Writing	Communication ; Public Speaking
Leading People	Leadership ; Management	Leadership ; Management ; Teaching; Team Building; Team Leadership
Working With People	Customer Service ; Professionalism; Sales	Customer Service ; Sales ; Teamwork

Source: Lightcast; author analysis. Notes: bolded words represent exact matches between online job postings and individual profiles.

World Economic Forum 2025 Future of Jobs Report

The *Future of Jobs Report 2025* brings together the perspective of over 1,000 leading global employers—collectively representing more than 14 million workers across 22 industry clusters and 55 economies from around the world—to examine how these macrotrends impact jobs and skills, and the workforce transformation strategies employers plan to embark on in response.

<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>



Core Skills in 2025

1.  Analytical thinking
2.  Resilience, flexibility and agility
3.  Leadership and social influence
4.  Creative thinking
5.  Motivation and self-awareness
6.  Technological literacy
7.  Empathy and active listening
8.  Curiosity and lifelong learning
9.  Talent management
10.  Service orientation and customer service

Top Fastest Growing Skills by 2030

1.  AI and big data
2.  Networks and cybersecurity
3.  Technological literacy
4.  Creative thinking
5.  Resilience, flexibility and agility
6.  Curiosity and lifelong learning
7.  Leadership and social influence
8.  Talent management
9.  Analytical thinking
10.  Environmental stewardship

Skills for Success in an AI-Driven Workforce

What 2026 workforce research shows



Workflow Thinking

Break work into steps, decide where AI adds value, and define where human review belongs.



Critical Evaluation

Judge AI output for accuracy and context — catch it when a recommendation misses the nuance.



Emotional Intelligence

Read the room, navigate disagreement, and handle the human moments AI can't.



Continuous Learning

Adapt to new tools and shifting guidance without waiting for perfect certainty.

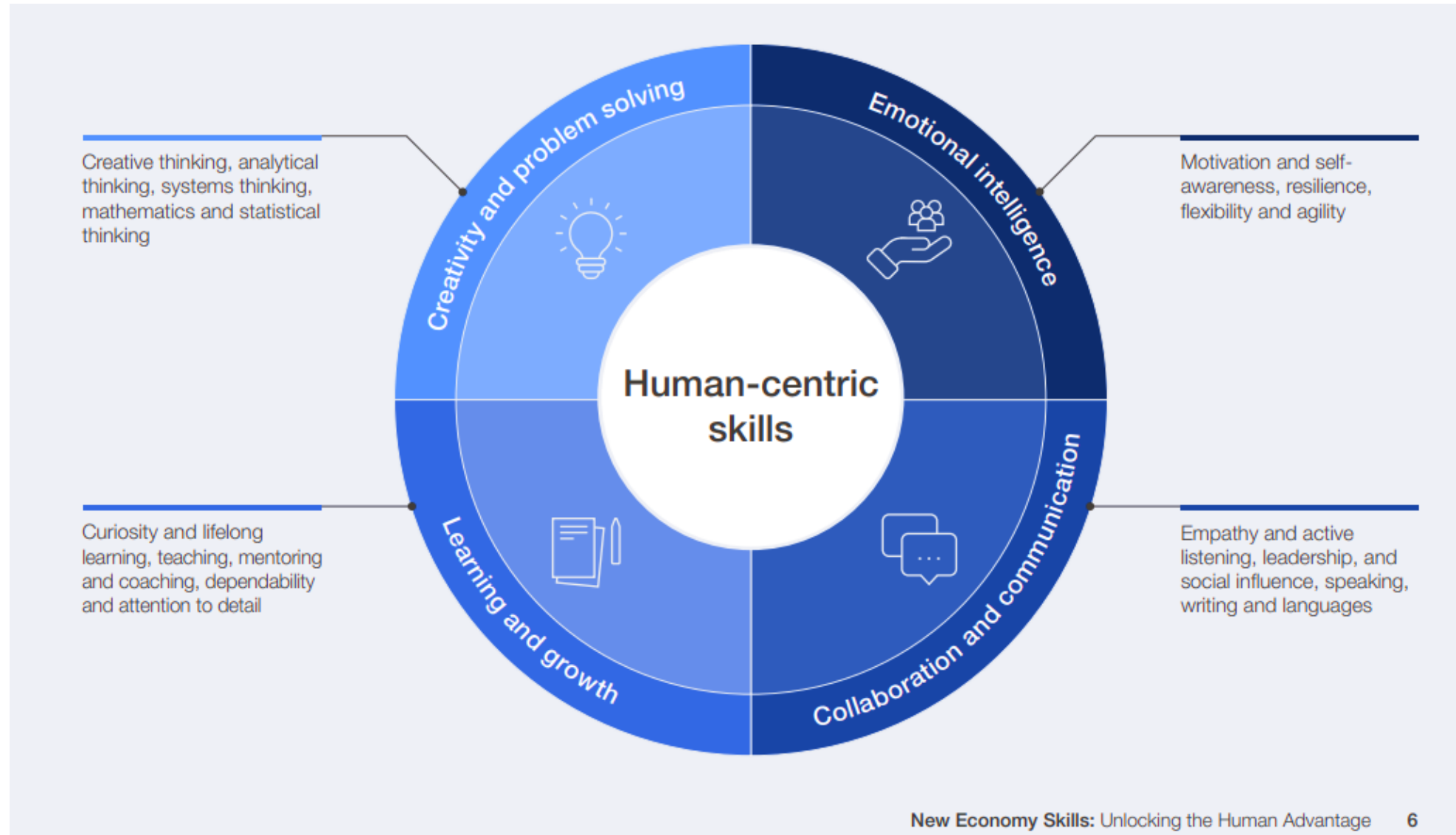
37% higher

cognitive skill demand in roles integrated with generative AI

80% of workers

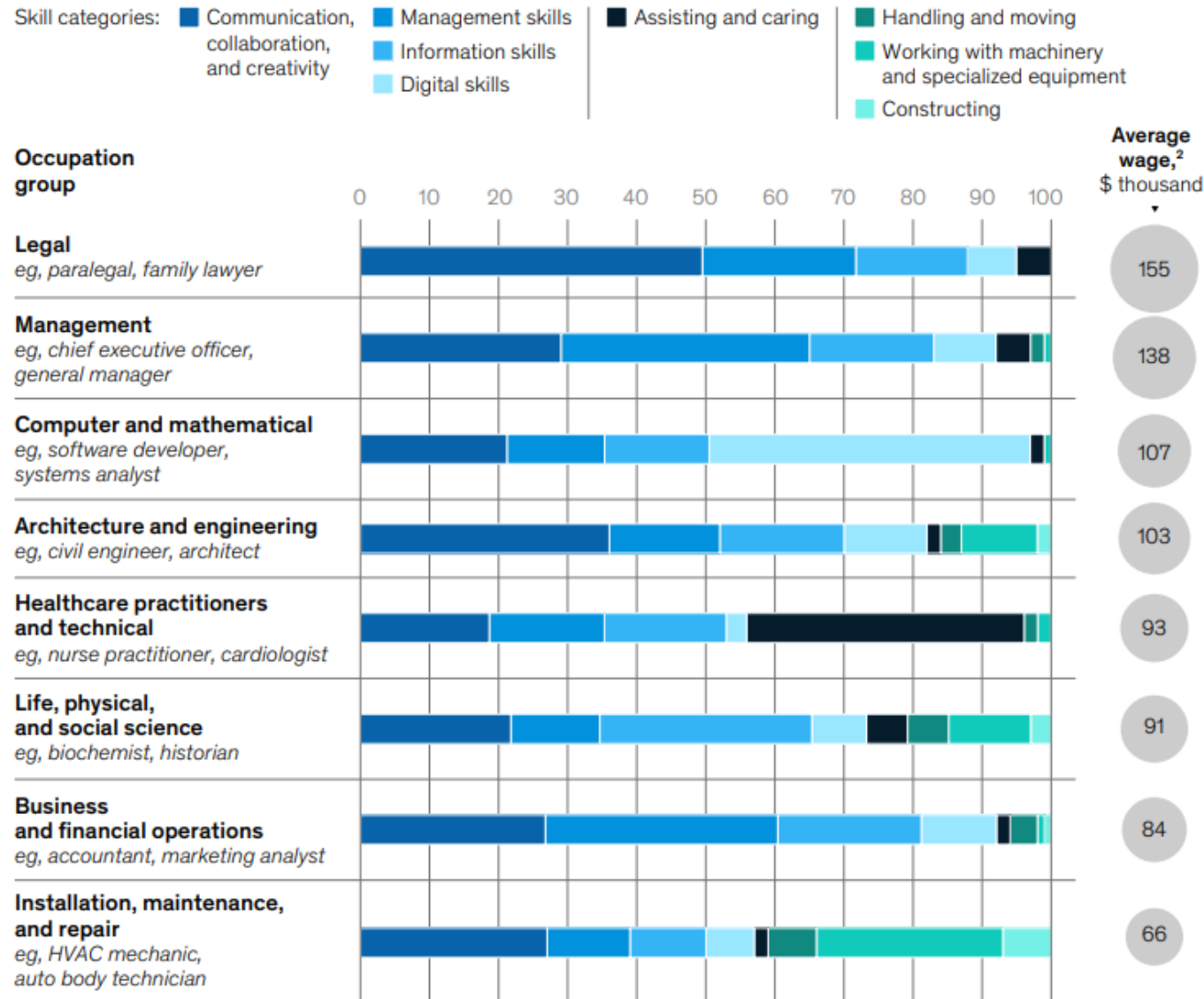
will need new AI-related skills within the next 12–18 months

Research conducted by Indeed underscores the enduring importance of human-centric skills in an increasingly digitalized world.



Skills demanded by employers vary by type of occupation.

Skill distribution in the US, by occupation group,¹ %

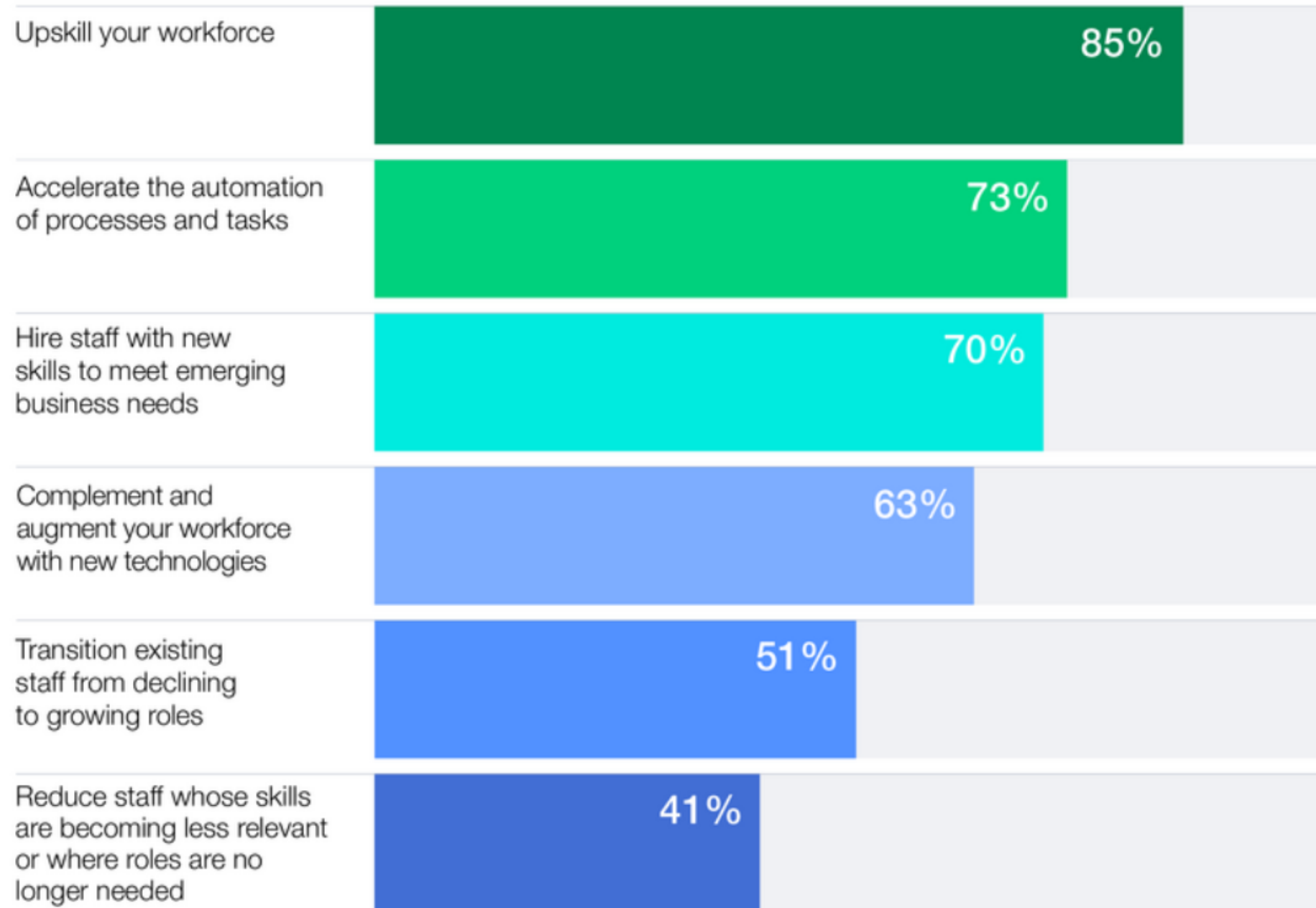


McKinsey:

Human skills will evolve, not disappear, as people work closely with AI

<https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/our-research/agents-robots-and-us-skill-partnerships-in-the-age-of-ai>

UPSKILLING is the top workforce strategy for employers by 2030



To Unlock the Full Value of AI, Invest in Your People

By [Julie Bedard](#), [Jessica Beidelman](#), [Elizabeth Lyle](#), and [Reinhard Messenböck](#)

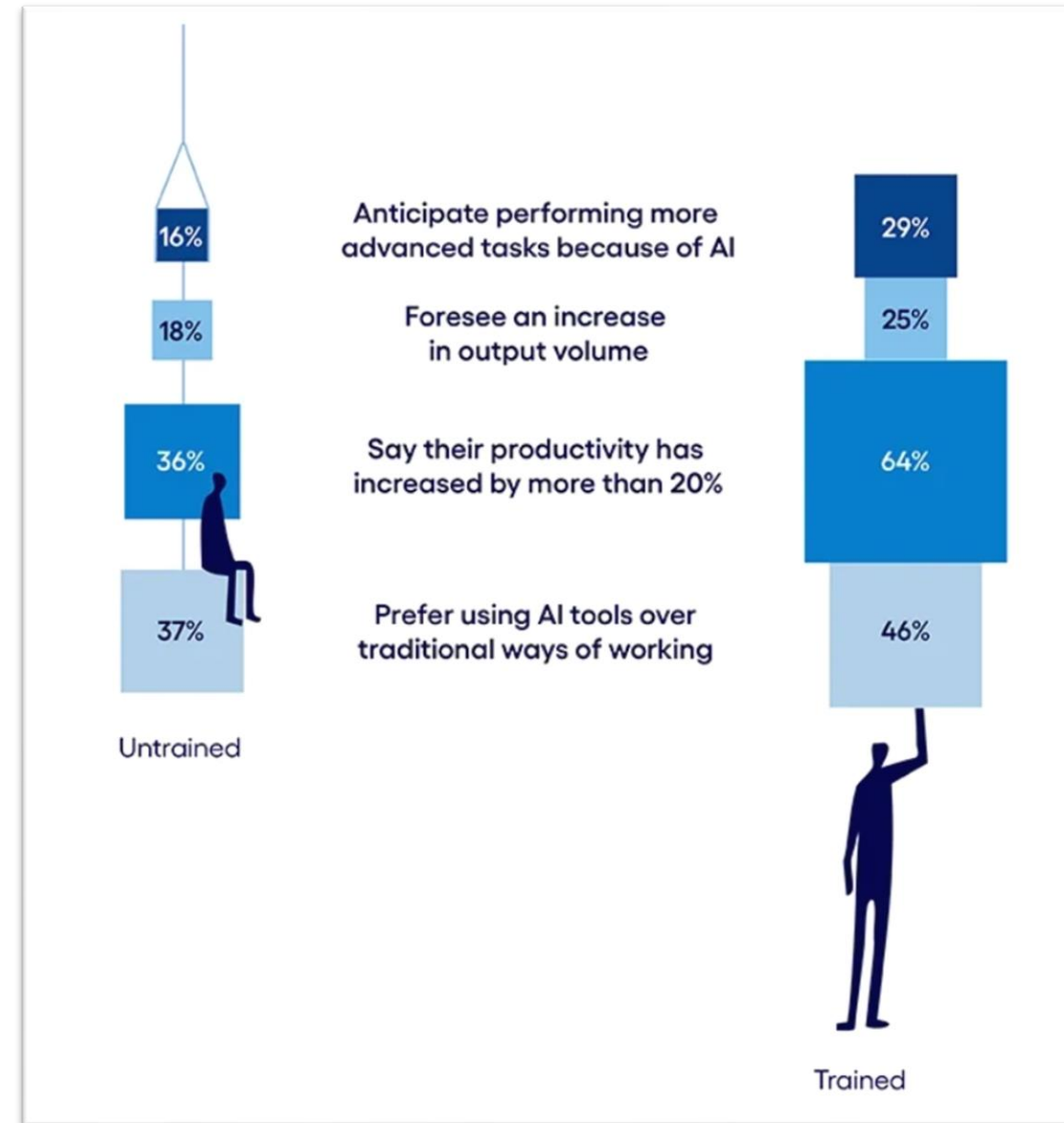
ARTICLE NOVEMBER 10, 2025 12 MIN READ



Cognizant: How skilling translates to productivity

<https://www.cognizant.com/us/en/insights/insights-blog/workforce-upskilling-for-ai-value#spy-2>

Profile of trained vs. untrained workers



WORK-BASED LEARNING

Building the Skills AI Can't Replace

A conversation on career-connected learning in the AI era

Two overlapping teal circles of different shades are positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, serving as a decorative element.

What's Rising in Value

As AI absorbs routine tasks, employers describe adaptability as the new job security.

1

Judgment & Decision-Making

Someone still has to decide what to do with AI's output.

2

Adaptability

Fast learners across many tools beat experts in just one.

3

AI Literacy

Knowing where AI fails and when to push back on it.

4

Ethical Reasoning

Someone has to decide not just what AI can do, but what it should.

From Skill to Experience

Work-based learning is how these skills actually get practiced.

Adaptability

Job shadows & internships

Ambiguous, unscripted situations a classroom can't replicate

Judgment

Simulations & Experiential Learning

Weighing incomplete information and living with the outcome

Creativity

Industry Sponsored Projects

Problems with no answer key — AI can generate options, not pick one

AI Fluency

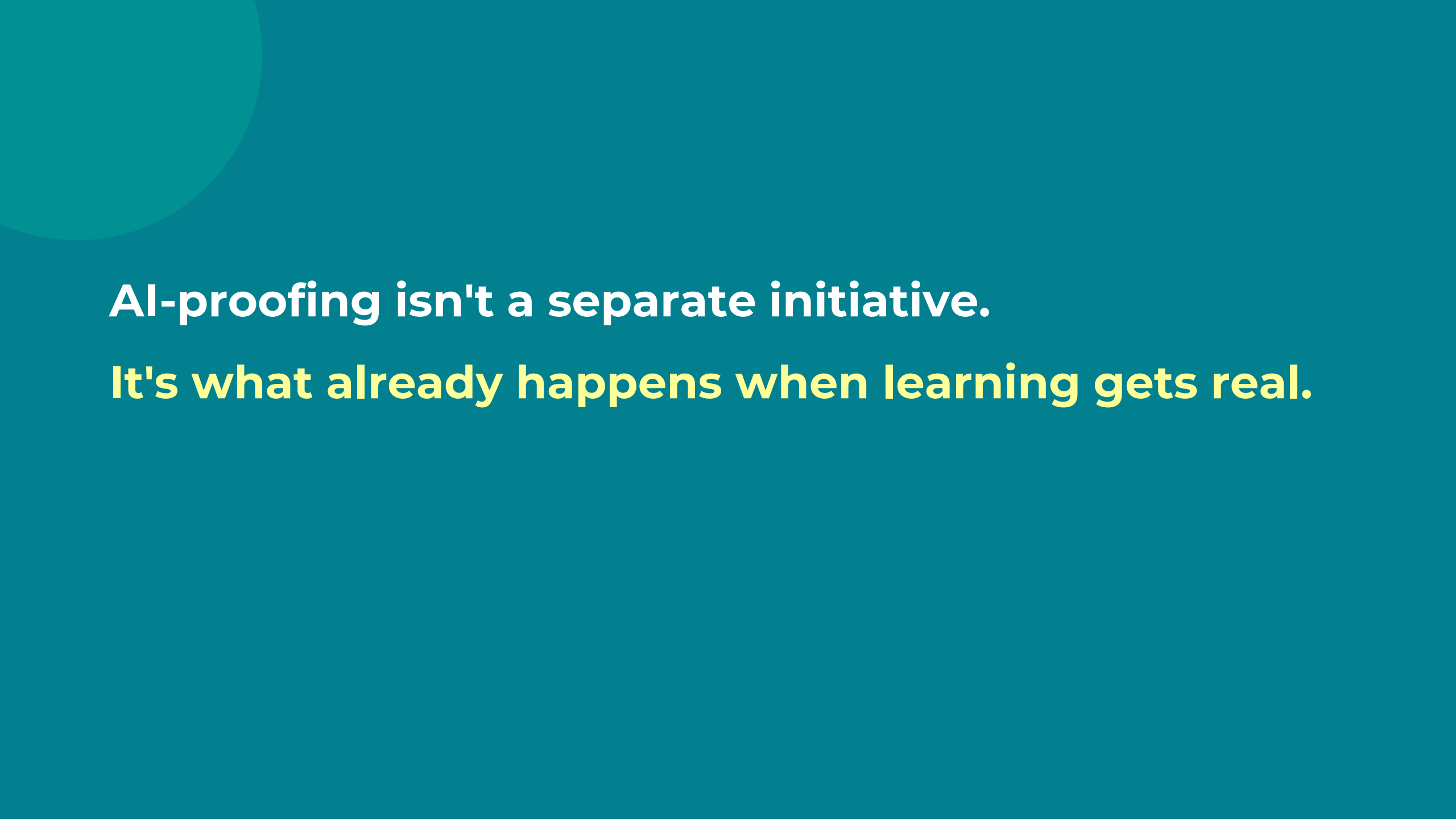
Applied practice, real stakes

Learning when to trust AI output and when to override it

Local Industry Knowledge

Career Speakers and Site Visits

Direct line to what's actually happening in the field right now



AI-proofing isn't a separate initiative.

It's what already happens when learning gets real.



EDUCATION FOR
WHAT'S NEXT™



Work Based Learning Solutions



- Engaging and relevant learning experiences act as scaffolding – up to 30 hours
- Prepares students for additional work-based learning, jobs, internships, and apprenticeships
- JA's network of Career / Industry speakers provide real-world context
- Includes stackable credential aligned with Colorado's Talent Pipeline Report
- Provided at no cost to schools and include continuous support from our education staff.

JA Essential Work Skills

Student Learning Journey

Participate in one learning experience to learn and apply competencies in collaborative environment.

JA Essential Skills for Work

or

JA Company Program



Earn competency-based micro-credentials by passing work scenario-based skills tests.



Earn the JA Essential Work Skills Credential.



JA Essential Skills for Work

Prerequisite Learning Experience



Initial Release: July 31st, 2026

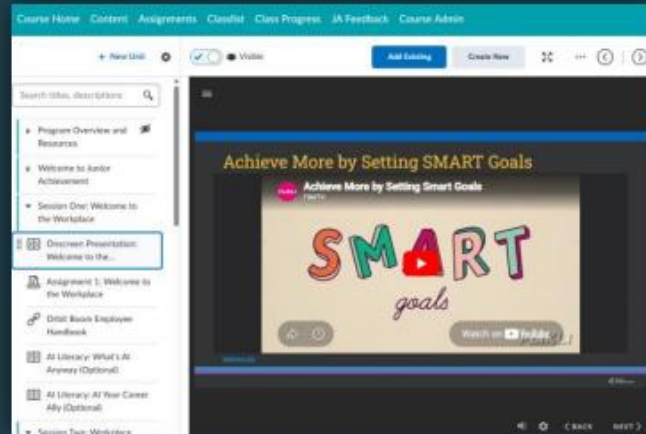
- 10-session, facilitator-led learning experience for 10th-12th grade
- Builds transferable workplace skills through collaborative business challenges and a workplace simulation
- Students apply critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-direction in real-world scenarios
- Build student confidence, teamwork, and job readiness through engaging activities and independent project
- Prepares students for the JA Essential Work Skills Credential

Engaging Materials



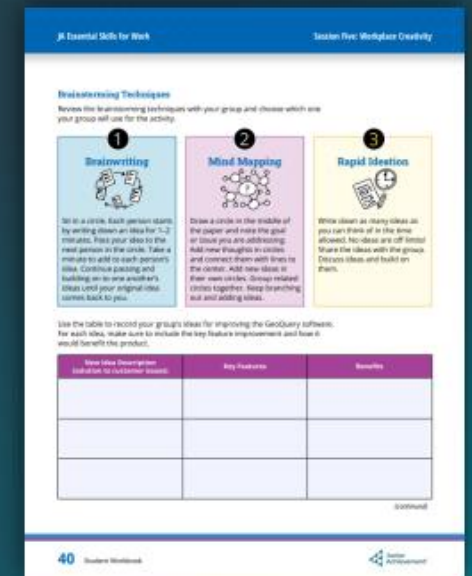
Everything you need to teach in one platform:

- Resources to prepare
- Facilitator guides
- Slide presentations
- Printable/downloadable student materials
- Digital activity materials



Collaborate on a Solution

- Listen to each other's points of view.
- List the options.
- Take a vote on each option to narrow down the list.
- Discuss the remaining options, giving everyone a voice.
- Take another vote.
- Have a final discussion to refine the wording of the agreed-upon solution.



JA Essential Work Skills Credential

Earn 6 competency-based, stackable micro-credentials by passing scenario-based assessments to receive the full Essential Work Skills Credential

JA Essential Work Skills Credential ⓘ



JA Essential Work Skills Credential
Earn all 6 micro-credentials to receive your credential.



SHARE

LEARN



TAKE TEST



TAKE TEST



TAKE TEST



TAKE TEST



TAKE TEST

Patience and Sergio, co-owners of Inner Beauty Salon, are discussing their current business sales for the year.
Watch the video and answer the corresponding questions.



What the Credential Represents



- Provides evidence students have practiced and demonstrated **foundational workplace behaviors** through authentic, scenario-based assessments
- **Prepares students** for first real-world skill application (internships, work-based learning, jobs, college, and career exploration)
- Serves as a **readiness signal**—not a certification of mastery



Engaging Communication
ESSENTIAL WORK SKILLS

3 attempts left

LEARN SKILLS:

Engaging Communication

Score: 54% not passed

Ready to sharpen your skills? These learning resources can help you level-up, boost your confidence, and prepare for the Skills Test.

Complete the required learning before retaking the test.



Clear Communication

① Skill / 10 mins / Not Taken

REQUIRED LEARNING



Prepare for Hired

① Skill / 15 mins / Not Taken

REQUIRED LEARNING



Active Listening in the Workplace

① Skill / 15 mins / Completed

RETAKE



Communicate Virtually

① Skill / 15 mins / Not Taken

REQUIRED LEARNING



Tailor Your Communication

① Skill / 10 mins / Not Taken

LEARN



Cleaning Up Your Communication

① Skill / 10 mins / Not Taken

REQUIRED LEARNING

- Each competency includes learning modules for additional skill-building and preparation prior to each assessment attempt
- Learners have 3 attempts to achieve an 80% or higher score to earn each micro-credential
- After non-passing attempt, required learning modules are to be completed prior to retake



Prepare for Hired

Junior Achievement

Contribute to Group Success

HELLO

my name is

type your name here

Audio Programmer Intern

Write your name on the name badge to get started.

Continue



SKILLS TEST:

Critical and Analytical Thinking

Score: 100% passed

Congratulations! You have earned the Critical and Analytical Thinking Micro-credential. Go to your dashboard to earn more.

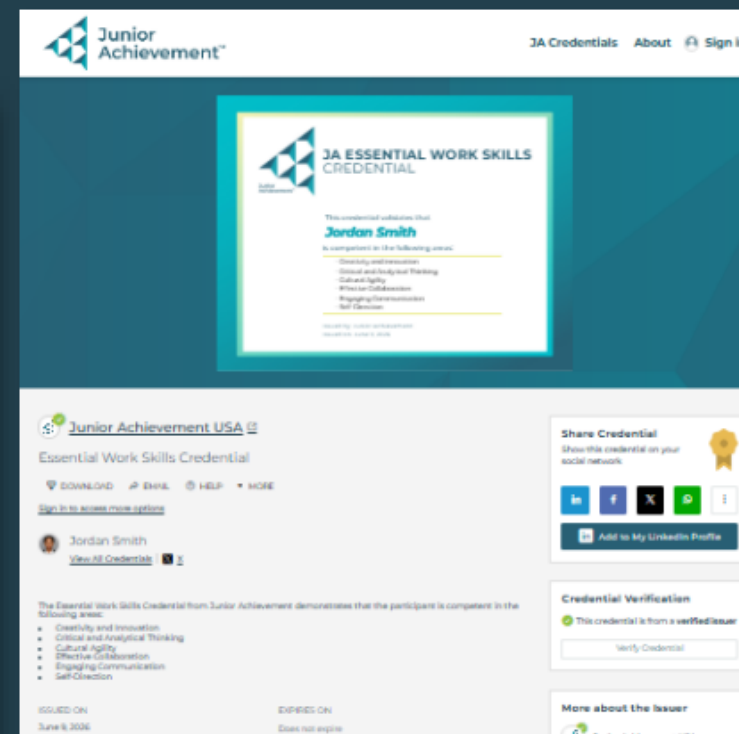
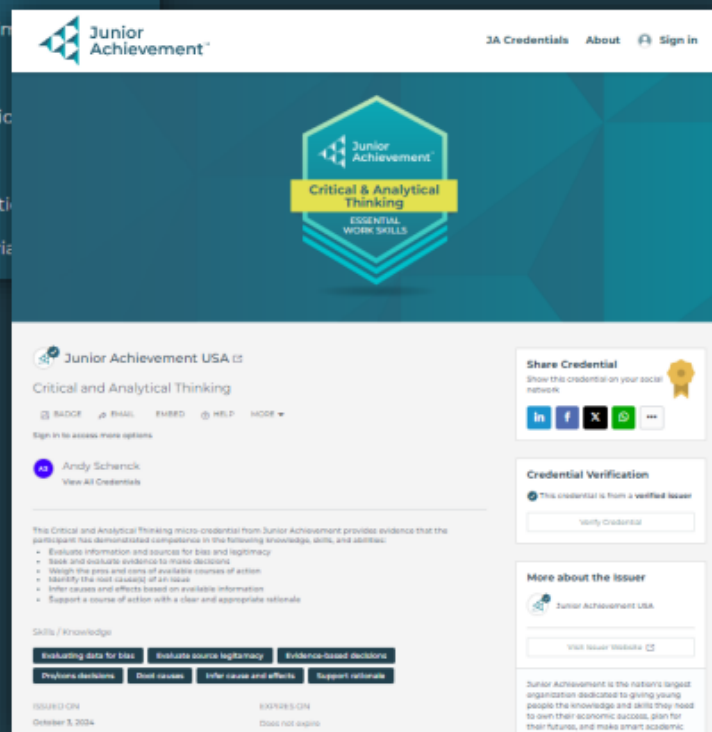
[DASHBOARD](#)

[VIEW TEST HISTORY](#)

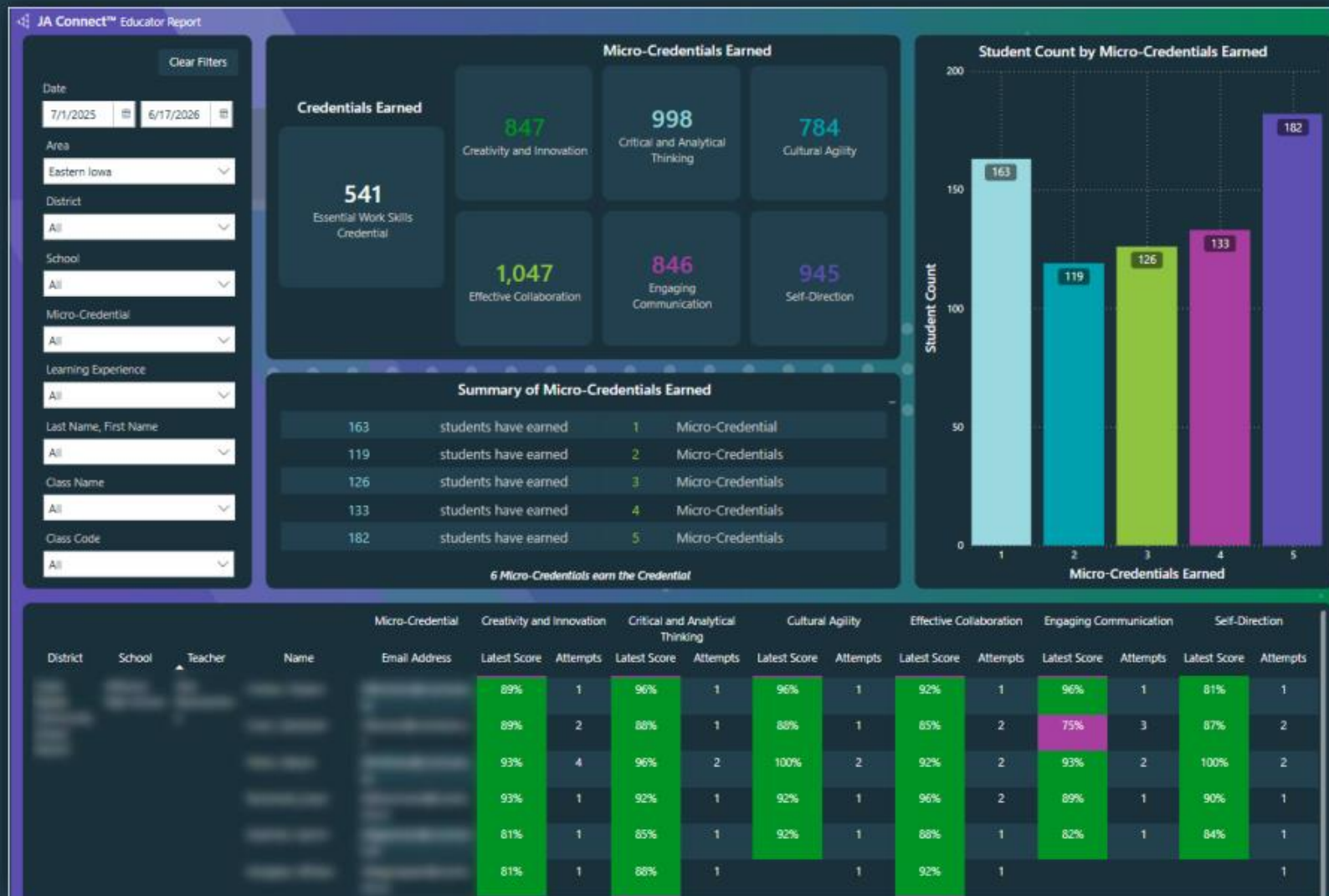
Critical and Analytical Thinking Skills

- Evaluate information and sources for bias and legitimacy
- Seek and evaluate evidence to make decisions
- Weigh the pros and cons of available courses of action
- Identify the root cause(s) of an issue
- Infer causes and effects based on available information
- Support a course of action with a clear and appropriate rationale

- **Share earned credentials with employers or colleges in a variety of ways like LinkedIn**
- **Provide evidence of employer-relevant skills and workforce readiness**
- **Credentials are JA validated and portable**



Robust Reporting Tools



Real-time Data

- Verify student completion
- Educator and School District Reporting
- Insights to improve implementation



Future-Ready Leaders

- **Quality Work-Based Learning** that is scalable, meaningful, and enjoyable
- Skill-development sessions facilitated by educators: Leading with Purpose, Communicating and Responding as a Facilitator, and Leading through Decision Making
- Prep sessions that focus on time management, self-awareness, organization, and collaboration skills
- Students demonstrate their learning through an applied learning experience organized by JA
- Concludes with an industry-led structured reflection activity



Engaging Materials - JA Future Ready Leaders



Everything you need to manage JA Future Ready Leaders :

- Facilitator Guides
- Training Resources
- Onscreen Presentations
- Printable/downloadable student materials
- Surveys

What might these students need from a facilitator right now?



PREP SESSION 1: Communicating and Responding as a Facilitator

QUICK-START GUIDE

Session Length	Grade Level	Expected Prep Time
45 min	6-12	15-20 min

Guiding Question

How do I communicate clearly and respond to what younger students need as every learner stays engaged and supported?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Identify key communication behaviors (verbal, nonverbal, listening) that support younger learners.
- Recognize common student cues and describe appropriate facilitator responses.
- Practice clear and engaging communication while facilitating a short activity.
- Set one specific communication goal for their applied learning experience.

JA FUTURE READY LEADERS® PREP SESSION 1 Communicating and Responding as a Facilitator

Story Remix

Option A: Describe a time you noticed someone in your group was struggling but didn't say anything. What did you do—or what do you wish you had done?

Option B: Tell about a moment when you realized someone needed something different from you than what you were giving. How did you figure that out?

Choose the elements that made your story clearest and most engaging.

- ☐ Facing
- ☐ Tone
- ☐ Structure
- ☐ Gestures
- ☐ Eye contact
- ☐ Examples
- ☐ Pacing
- ☐ Clarity of language
- ☐ Audience check-ins
- ☐ Simplifying details
- ☐ Slowing down
- ☐ Emphasizing key points

Go With The Flow Reference

Acknowledge → Redirect → Keep the Session Moving

JA FUTURE READY LEADERS® Facilitator Guide

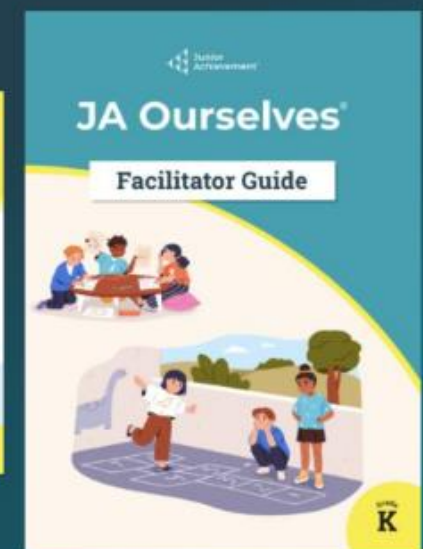


Engaging Materials, K-5



Everything you need to
manage your K-5
experience:

- Facilitator Guides
- Training Resources
- Onscreen Presentations
- Printed kit materials and manipulatives
- Digital Student Materials
- Surveys



VALUE FOR STUDENTS



Builds real-world leadership skills



Applies learning in an authentic setting



Builds confidence and sense of purpose



Strengthens **future-ready** competencies



Creates meaningful connection to community



Reinforces core concepts through teaching

Simon Says: JA Edition



Character Traits

How You Treat People



- Respect
- Empathy
- Teamwork

How You Handle Responsibility



- Responsibility
- Initiative
- Honesty

How You Handle Pressure



- Courage
- Self-Control
- Adaptability

Expanded Leadership Filter

- What's really happening?
- Who is affected?
- What character traits does this call for? Have I developed them?
- **What options do you have?**
- **What would you choose? Why?**



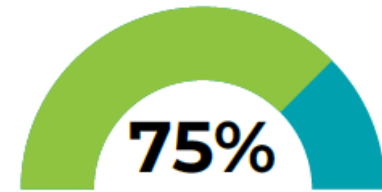
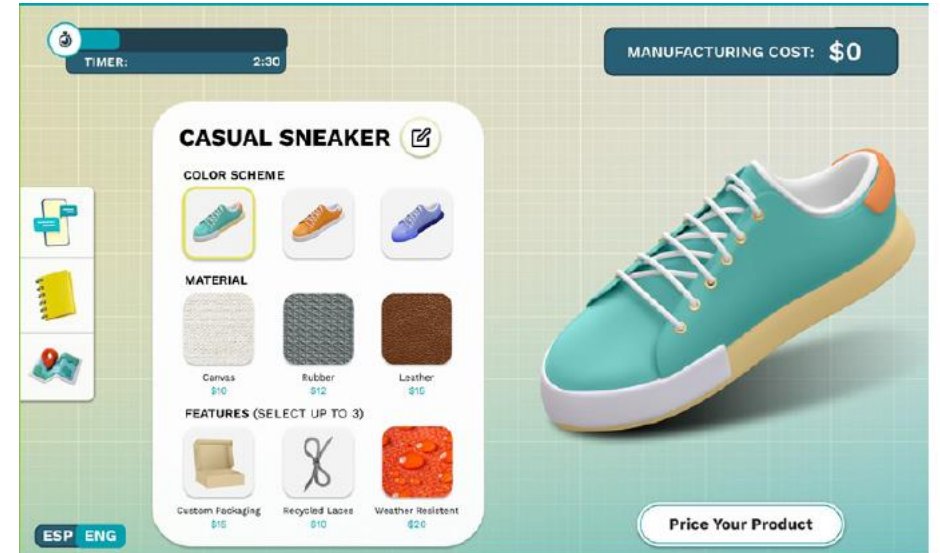
Slow down.
Understand what's going on.
Make a thoughtful decision.

MS: JA Business Quest

An interactive virtual simulation where middle school students are tasked with starting a new business and making decisions based on community events, market structures, and the global economy.



Equips students with foundational business concepts and empowers them to navigate the complexities of the modern economy and become informed decision-makers in an increasingly interconnected world.

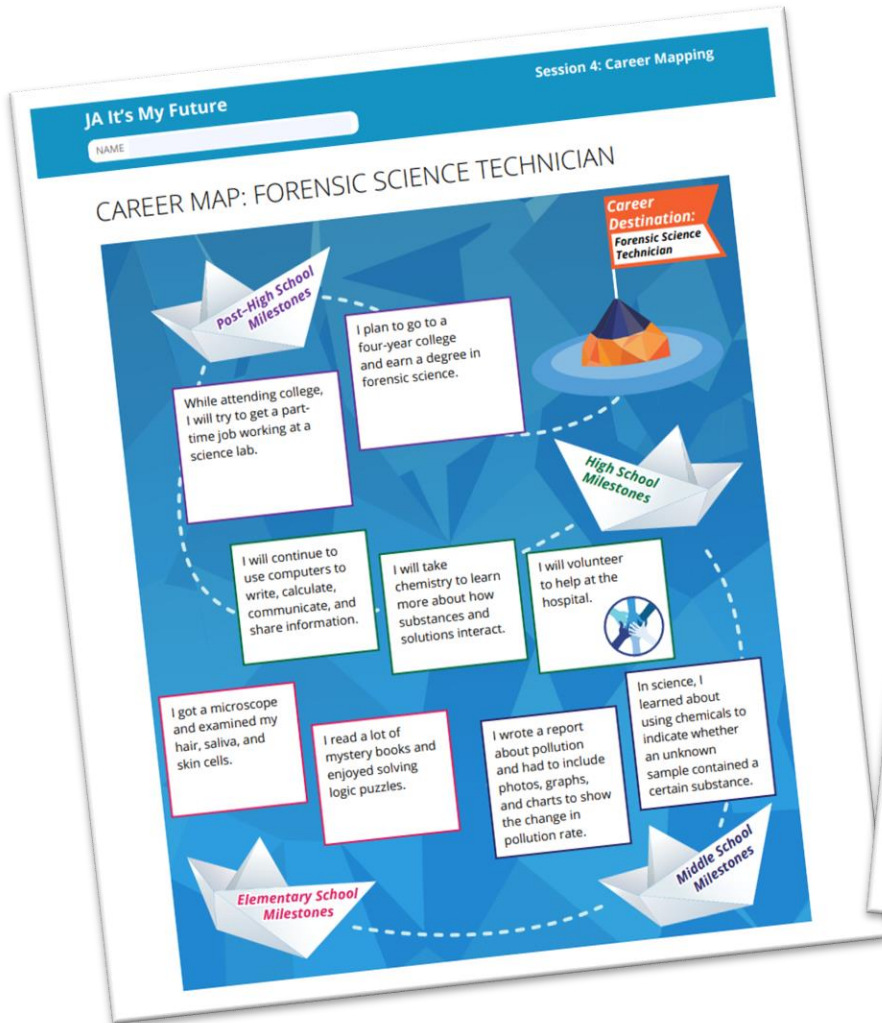


of participating students agree they understand how global events can impact a business

“My students responded to JA Business Quest very well. The engagement level was as high as it has been all year.”

-- Seth Carroll, Oberon Middle School

MS: JA It's My Future



Session 6: Soft Skills

JA It's My Future

NAME _____

SOFT SKILLS SELF-EVALUATION

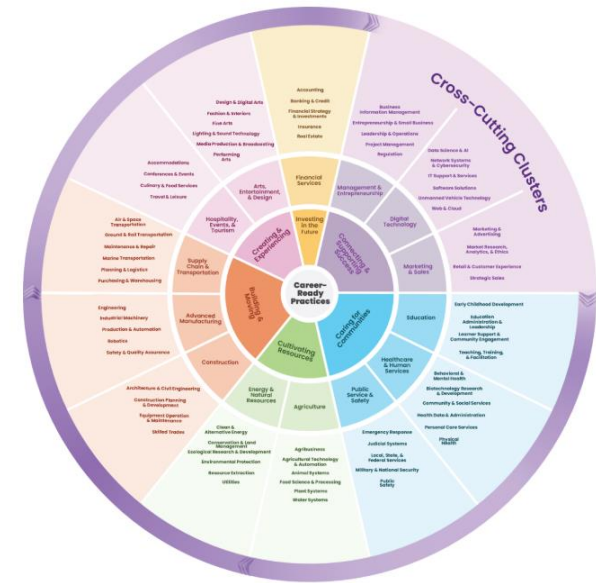
- Review each soft skill.
- Decide whether you have the skill now or whether you need to work toward it.
- Give an example of something you've done to demonstrate the skill.
- Make note of two skills that you can work to improve.

Soft Skills Self-Evaluation

Skill	Not Yet	Now	Example
Communication			
• I listen to others and do not interrupt.	☐	☐	
• I ask questions when I don't understand something.	☐	☐	
• I talk to peers and adults when there's a problem.	☐	☐	
Teamwork			
• I work well with other people.	☐	☐	
• I respect other people's ideas.	☐	☐	
• I can compromise to achieve a team goal.	☐	☐	
Work Ethic			
• I get things done, even if they take longer than I expected.	☐	☐	
• I put forth my best effort.	☐	☐	
• I look for things that need doing, instead of waiting to be told.	☐	☐	
Attitude			
• I am positive and enthusiastic.	☐	☐	
• I am interested in learning new information and skills.	☐	☐	
• I take direction and criticism well.	☐	☐	
Professionalism			
• I arrive early or on time.	☐	☐	
• I dress and act appropriately for each situation.	☐	☐	
• I know when to ignore my cell phone, email, and texts.	☐	☐	

Junior Achievement®

18



Thank you!



JA FUTURE READY LEADERS®

Leadership Session 2 • Leading Through Decision-Making Facilitator Guide

SESSION LENGTH
45 min

GRADE LEVEL
9–12

EXPECTED PREP TIME
15–20 min

GUIDING QUESTION

How can I make thoughtful, confident choices when different needs or options are pulling me in different directions?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Assess unfamiliar situations by identifying what's really happening and who is affected.
- Reflect on how intentional, character-driven responses shape their leadership in the field experience.

KEY CONCEPTS

Leadership in Everyday Choices

Students recognize that leadership shows up in small, real-time decisions that create clarity and trust.

Strategic Decision-Making

Students use the Expanded Leadership Filter to analyze situations, weigh options, and choose responses intentionally.

Intentional Mindset

Students practice pausing before reacting and choosing actions that reflect their character, not their stress.

STANDARDS

CTE Anchor 5: Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking

Students evaluate leadership behaviors by analyzing realistic classroom scenarios, identifying what's really happening, and making intentional decisions using the Expanded Leadership Filter.

CASEL: Responsible Decision-Making

Students consider who is affected in each scenario, recognize different perspectives, and choose responses grounded in empathy, awareness, and character traits like adaptability and self-control.

NBEA Economics & Personal Finance II (Self-Awareness) & Entrepreneurship IV (Communication & Presentation)

Students apply communication and interpersonal skills by discussing options, justifying their choices, and collaborating to create strategies that reflect professional behavior in facilitation and workplace settings.

Scenarios

.....

Challenge #2: You're helping run a school event, like a game night or talent show. Things are going well, but the schedule is starting to fall behind and some people are getting bored and leaving. What do you do?

.....

Challenge #3: You're leading a small group activity with elementary students. One student refuses to participate and says the activity is boring. Two other students are starting to agree. The rest of the group is engaged and on track. What do you do?

.....

Challenge #4: You're the only cashier at a restaurant. Your shift is ending soon, your replacement is late, and the manager is busy. Customers are still arriving, but you have somewhere important to be. What do you do?

.....