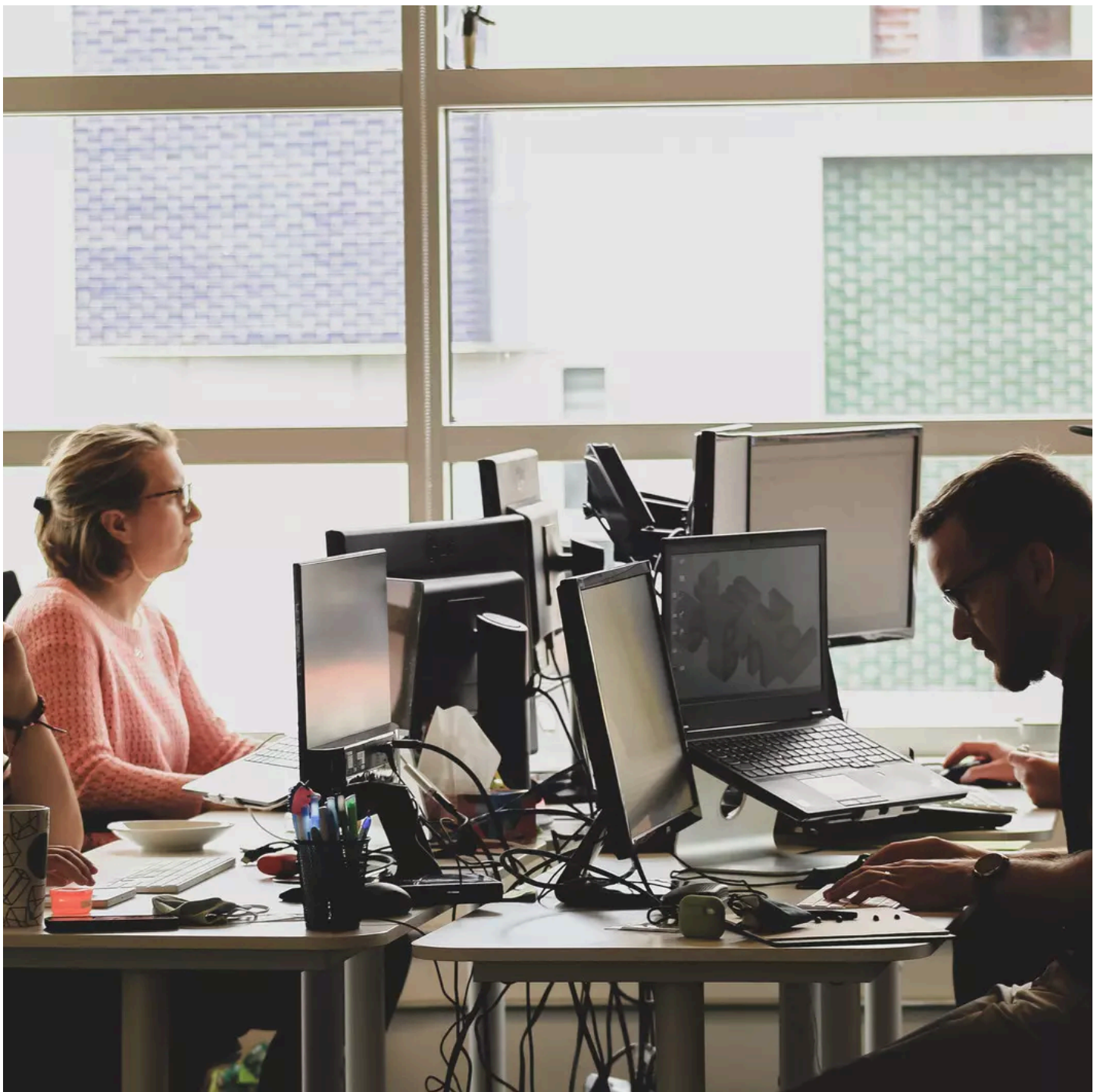




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# The future of jobs in the age of AI, sustainability and deglobalization

May 3, 2023



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This article is part of:

**The Growth Summit: Jobs and Opportunity for All**



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- There is no doubt that the future of work will be disruptive.
- But it need not be dystopian.
- The [Future of Jobs Report 2023](#) shows how to empower people in a world of economic uncertainty and advancing AI.

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It is hard to overestimate how tumultuous the last few years have been for workers around the world. The global COVID-19 pandemic led to lockdowns for most people except essential workers and then cautious, partial returns to work or job losses in industries that never fully recovered. Almost immediately, this was followed by the disruption of war in Ukraine and soaring energy and food prices, causing a decline in real wages.

Technology adoption, already accelerating before and during the pandemic, potentially poses a new wave of transformation, especially to white-collar work through the rise of generative AI. And now a strong push for a much-needed green transformation is also leading to expectations of future displacement in carbon-intensive roles in favour of growth in emerging green jobs and skills.

Each new change alone would be difficult for affected workers to navigate, but together they have disrupted livelihoods broadly and created widespread uncertainty about the future. When uncertainty is this high, forecasting can help,

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# The Future of Jobs Report 2023

The World Economic Forum's [Future of Jobs Report 2023](#), released today, assesses the impact of macro trends, as well as technological change on jobs and skills over the next five years. The report finds that nearly a quarter of all jobs (23%) globally will change in the next five years. Across 45 economies, covering 673 million workers, 69 million new jobs are expected to be created and 83 million to be eliminated, a net decrease of 14 million jobs, or 2% of current employment.

Investment in the green transition, as well as increasing consumer awareness of sustainability issues will create new opportunities. Roles from renewable energy engineers, solar energy installation and systems engineers to sustainability specialists and environmental protection professionals will be in high demand, translating to a growth of approximately one million jobs.

## Agriculture and education are jobs growth areas

The largest absolute gains in jobs will come from education (3 million jobs) and agriculture (4 million jobs), driven in part by demographics and in part by applications of new technologies in these fields. The new economic geography created by shifting supply chains and a greater focus on resilience over efficiency is also expected to create net job growth, with wins for economies in Asia and the Middle East especially.

Technology will create structural churn, with a quarter of companies seeing job decline from new technology adoption and more than half seeing job growth. But the human-machine frontier is shifting to new terrain. While expectations of the displacement of physical and manual work by machines has decreased, tasks requiring reasoning, communicating and coordinating – all traits with a comparative advantage for humans – are expected to be more automatable in the future.

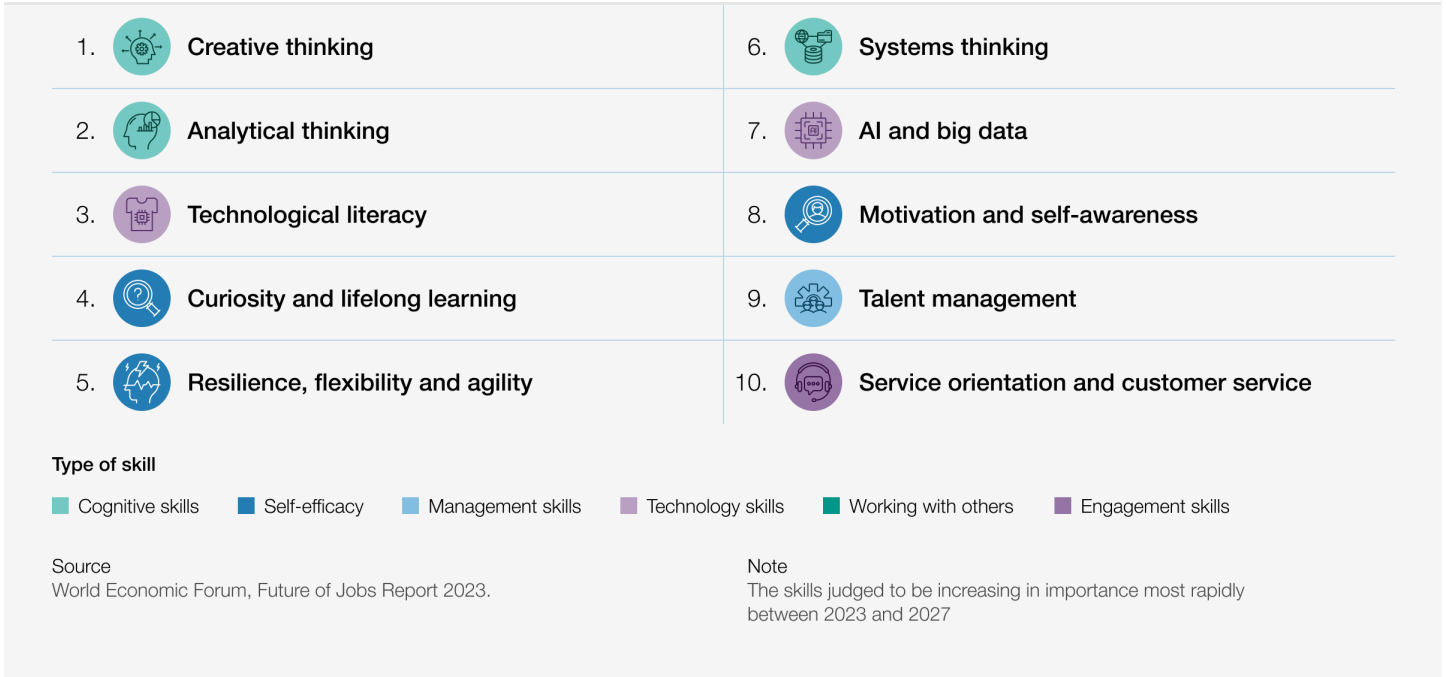


Image: World Economic Forum

This is not surprising. Generative artificial intelligence is expected to be adopted by nearly 75% of surveyed companies and is second only to humanoid and industrial robots in terms of expectations of job losses, most likely to affect bank tellers, cashiers, clerks, secretaries and accounting. Yet, the biggest threat to jobs is still seen to come not from technology, but from slowing economic growth, the rising costs of inputs and weaker purchasing power among consumers.

Have you read?

- [The future of jobs is green: How climate change is changing labour markets](#)
- [How pay transparency can help close wage gaps in the workplace](#)

Reskilling on the rise

We also find that almost half of an individual’s skills - 44% - will need to change on average across all jobs. The skills with the highest share of companies reporting

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systems thinking and AI and big data. Skills with less demand include global citizenship, sensory processing abilities and manual dexterity, endurance and precision.

For many individuals, the concurrent shift in the wider economic environment, the integration of new technologies at work and the expectation of future uncertainty translates into frustration with current job prospects, fear about future ones and despair about growing economic disparity in the future. For many companies, there is concern about the talent required to thrive in the new context: 60% of companies are concerned about skills gaps and 54% worry about being able to attract talent. And for governments, particularly those that underinvested in education and lifelong learning systems thus far, human capital will become the key impediment to navigating the new economic landscape.

## **Preparing for the future of jobs**

How then should learners, workers, employers and governments prepare for the future of jobs?

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For today's students, analytical and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to understand and work with technology will be critical. Every student – regardless of their chosen fields – should aim to build these generalist skills to be ready for a rapidly changing future.

For today's workers in declining fields, there is a major reskilling and transition effort needed, whereas for those in changing or growing fields, there is a need for upskilling and developing the ability for constant learning. The good news is that skilling can happen fast and online learning can offer a level playing field: workers from all education levels – including those without college or graduate education – take the same time to acquire online skill credentials.

Yet, it cannot be on individual learners and workers alone to negotiate complex new terrain. Governments must provide resources and a roadmap. This presents a major and unprecedented dual challenge for policymaking: governments must balance support for innovation with the regulation needed to make new technologies safe and, at the same time, support workers through safety nets, care systems and job centres, while making major investments in skilling systems, rapid certifications and partnerships with the education sector, businesses and non-profits alike, to drive change at scale.

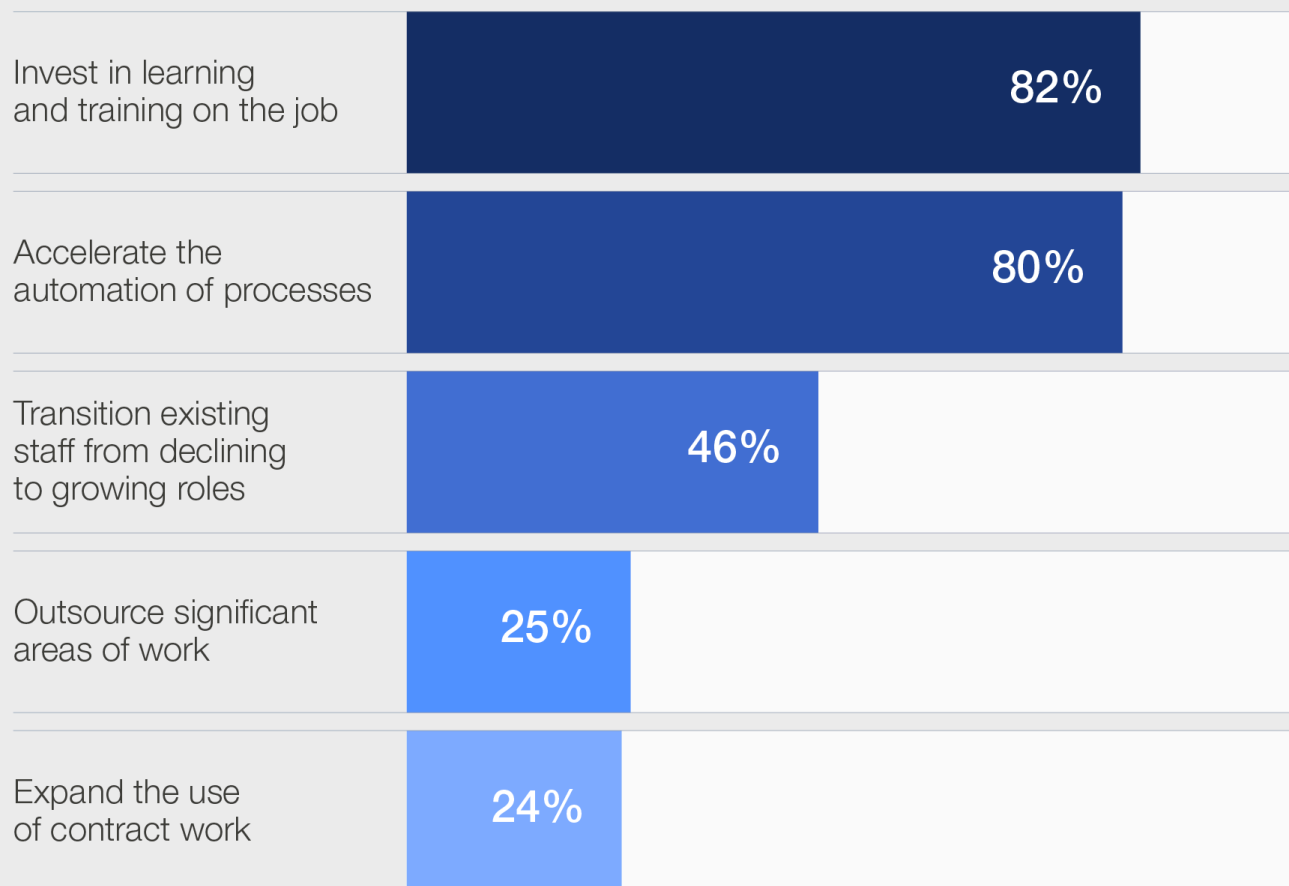
## **Employers must play a part**

Employers must play their part through investment in reskilling and upskilling – most expect to see a return on investment within one year, making training the most effective and responsible course of action. The best employers go further: supporting workers' transitions outside the company when required, prioritising safety and well-being, fostering diversity, equity and inclusion and, finally, placing a premium on taking a skills-first approach over one that prioritises qualifications or job history. Employers that take these actions close skills gaps faster and are proven to enhance loyalty, productivity and motivation.

## Workforce strategies, 2023-2027

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Share of organizations surveyed planning to adopt these workforce strategies



**Source:** World Economic Forum, *Future of Jobs Report 2023*.

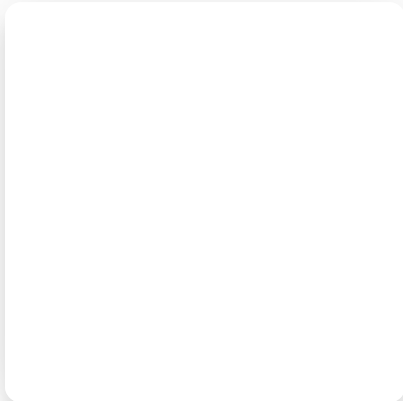
Share of organizations surveyed planning to adopt these workforce strategies. Image: World Economic Forum, *Future of Jobs Report 2023*

At the World Economic Forum, we provide the [Reskilling Revolution platform](#) to help one billion people in the global workforce with the skills needed to future-proof their careers by 2030. These partnerships have reached more than 350 million people since launching in 2020. But more such efforts are needed and at greater speed and scale.

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people firmly at the centre of the new global economy.

**Read the Future of Jobs Report 2023 [here](#). The World Economic Forum Growth Summit takes place 2-3 May. Find out more and follow along [here](#) and at [#growthsummit23](#).**



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