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JOB AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

AI skills are becoming more important than job experience. Here's how job seekers can adapt

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AI skills are becoming increasingly important for jobs.

Image: Unsplash/Nicole Wolf

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This article is part of:

Centre for the New Economy and Society

- AI skills could soon rival experience when employers select job candidates.

deploying AI effectively and responsibly and ensuring that education systems provide the next generation of workers with AI skills training.

AI aptitude could soon rival experience when choosing between job candidates. This is according to a new international study by Microsoft and LinkedIn on [labour and recruitment trends due to the rise of generative AI](#). The research also predicts the rise of AI super users as the labour market – which has already undergone significant change in recent years – will shift again.

The 2024 Work Trend Index Annual Report draws on a survey of 31,000 people across 31 countries, hiring trends from LinkedIn, Microsoft 365 productivity data and research with Fortune 500 companies.

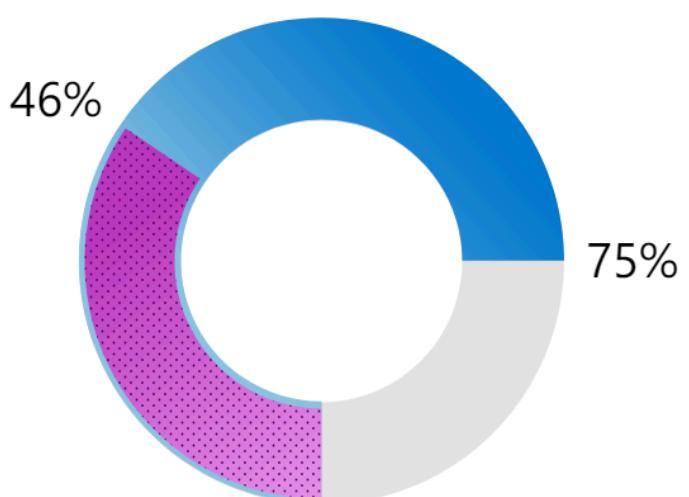
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Three Out of Four People Use AI at Work

Usage nearly doubled in the last six months.

75% of people are
already using AI at work

46% of them started using
it less than 6 months ago



AI is becoming the rule rather than the exception in the workplace. Image: Microsoft, LinkedIn

The research reveals that three-quarters of people surveyed use generative AI at work, with the majority (78%) bringing their own AI tools into the workplace, especially in small and medium-sized businesses.

AI emerges as a tool to help people deal with an increased pace and volume of work that more than two-thirds of respondents struggle with (68%), helping them offload menial tasks.

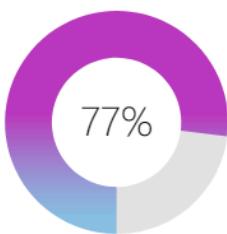
However, many of those drawing on AI at work fear that doing so might make them look replaceable (53%) and worry that AI could replace their jobs (45%).

But it looks like the opposite could be the case.

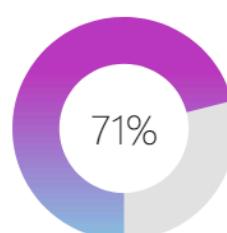
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The New Hiring Imperative

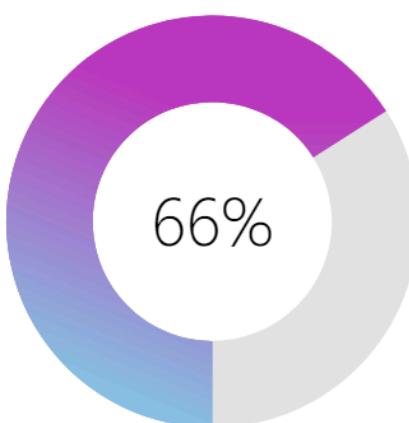
AI aptitude takes center stage.



Leaders say early-in-career talent will get greater responsibilities due to AI



Leaders are more likely to hire a less experienced candidate with AI skills than a more experienced one without them



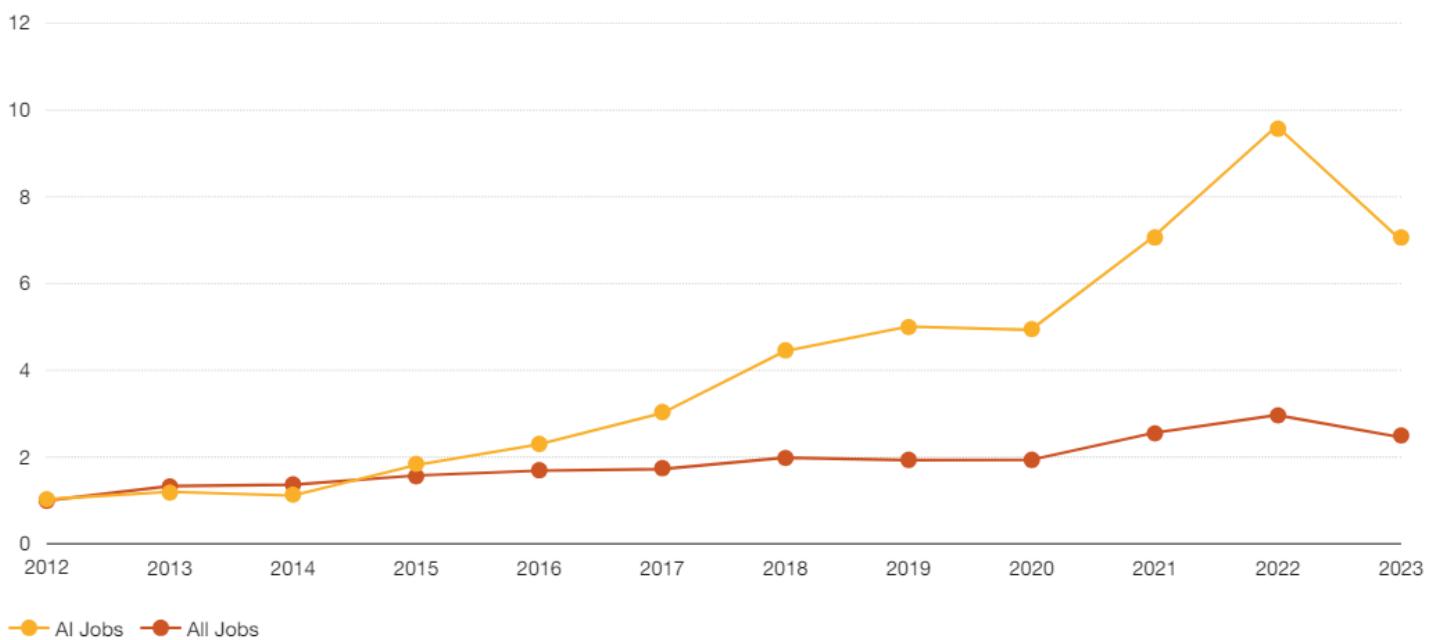
Leaders would not hire someone without AI skills

AI skills could make or break a job candidate's chances to clinch a role. Image: Microsoft, LinkedIn

Two-thirds of business leaders surveyed say they wouldn't hire a candidate without AI skills. Nearly three-quarters said they would rather hire a less experienced candidate with AI skills than a more experienced candidate without them.

Growth in AI jobs has outpaced all jobs since at least 2016

Number of Job Postings, relative to 2012



Source: PwC analysis of Lightcast data. The analysis represents six of the fifteen countries: US, UK, Singapore, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Nine countries have been excluded due to data prior to 2018 being unavailable: France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.

AI jobs have been growing rapidly since the early 2010s. Image: PwC

AI specialist skills command a premium

This trend is consistent with [PwC's 2024 AI Jobs Barometer](#), which found that jobs requiring AI specialist skills are growing 3.5 times faster than all jobs combined. The exponential need for AI-qualified staff has been on an upward trajectory since 2016 – well before the advent of ChatGPT and other generative AI models.

for professionals such as lawyers, sales and marketing managers, and accountants.

This further underlines that AI skills are needed across roles and industries. The top three occupations that have added AI to their skills and aptitudes on LinkedIn are creatives: content writers, graphic designers and marketing managers.

Following hot on their heels are entrepreneurs and business professionals, along with the web and software developers you might more naturally expect to find on the list.

Wage premium for job vacancies which require AI skills by country

Occupation	Country AI Wage Premium				
	USA	UK	Canada	Australia	Singapore
Database Designers and Administrators	+53%	+58%	+8%	+14%	+35%
Lawyers	+49%	+27%	-	-	-5%
Sales and Marketing Managers	+43%	+14%	+3%	+7%	+3%
Financial Analysts	+33%	+32%	-	-	+11%
Applications Programmers	+32%	+24%	-	+7%	+34%
Systems Analysts	+30%	+34%	+15%	+7%	+28%
Accountants	+18%	+5%	+17%	-	+4%
Average wage premium across all jobs	+25%	+14%	+11%	+6%	+7%

Sources: PwC analysis of Lightcast data, ISCO-08 Occupation Codes (4-digit level). 2023 data. These findings do not demonstrate a causal relationship. These estimates are calculated by comparing the average salaries of AI job postings to those of non-AI postings for the same occupations. Two filters are applied to ensure (1) the count of AI job postings and (2) the ratio of AI jobs:non-AI jobs being compared is above a certain threshold. The analysis provided represents five of the 15 countries: UK, USA, Singapore, Canada and Australia. The remainder of the countries have been omitted from this analysis as the data was less extensive: New Zealand, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Roles requiring AI skills will command a wage premium. Image: PwC

The rise of the AI super user

job market. They also view AI knowledge as a way to get promoted faster (69%) and broaden their job opportunities (79%).

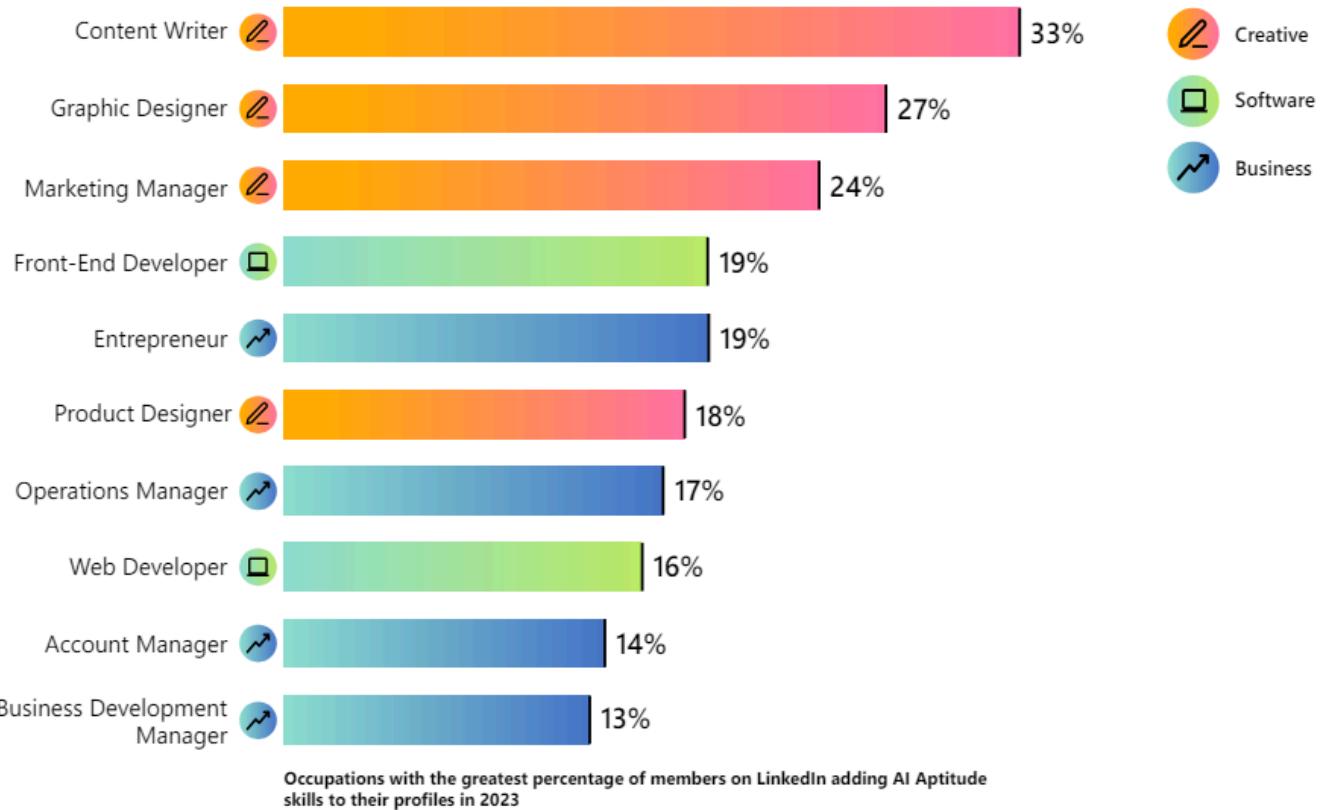
And people are acting on it: attendance of LinkedIn Learning courses on AI for non-technical professionals has increased 160% in the past six months.

Have you read?

- **[How to build the skills needed for the age of AI](#)**
 - **[Why we must bridge the skills gap to harness the power of AI](#)**
 - **[This is the one skill we all need in the age of AI](#)**
-

The research predicts that AI upskilling – whether through formal learning or simply by using AI tools in the workplace – may lead to the rise of ‘AI power users’.

Power users are those who are ahead of the curve in terms of their AI use. They use it several times a week at work, benefitting from making their workload more manageable, boosting their creativity or helping them focus on the most important work. It also makes them feel more motivated and enjoy work more.



Workers are upskilling to add AI to their repertoire as employers make AI skills a recruitment priority across sectors and roles. Image: Microsoft, LinkedIn

How to become an AI power user?

If the research findings are anything to go by, then becoming an AI power user is the way to go to further career progression. So, what are the habits that mark out a power user? According to the 2024 Work Trend Index, it's some of the following:

- **Experiment with different ways of using AI:** power users are more than two-thirds more likely than other survey respondents to do so.
- **Always ask yourself, “How can AI help?”:** power users are nearly 50% more likely to pause to explore what AI could contribute before tackling a new task, to keep trying if they don't get the perfect response the first time (+30%), for example, by researching new prompts (+56%).
- **‘Bookend’ your working day with AI:** 9 in 10 power users use AI tools to start their day and get set up for the next day.

- **Redesign business processes with AI:** power users don't just stop at reorganizing their own ways of working; they are also 66% more likely to redesign entire business processes and workflows in the organization using AI tools.

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The Power User Payoff of AI at Work

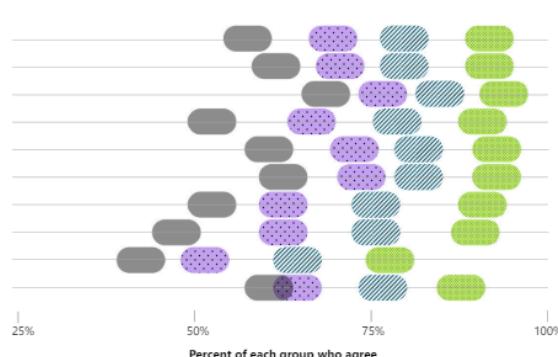
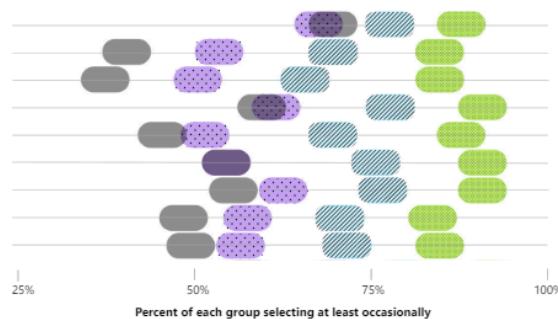
Power users are reshaping the workday and reaping the benefits.

Skeptics
are at least familiar with AI, but they only use it a few times a month (if ever). They say AI saves them 10 minutes or less per day.

Novices
are only somewhat familiar with AI (if at all) and use it only a few times a month (if ever). They say AI saves them 30 minutes or less per day.

Explorers
are only somewhat familiar with AI (if at all) and use it a few times a month or once a week. They say AI saves them between 5 and 30 minutes per day.

Power users
are at least familiar with AI and use it at least several times per week. They say it saves them more than 30 minutes per day.



How I use AI

When I don't get the response I want from the first prompt, I try again
I use AI to get ready for the following workday
I start my day using AI
I research and try new prompts
I regularly share my prompts / top tips on AI usage with my co-workers
I regularly experiment with different ways of using AI
I make it a priority to learn how to use AI effectively
I ask co-workers what prompts they find most useful
Before starting a task, I ask myself, "could AI help me with this?"

How AI impacts my experience at work

It makes my overwhelming workload more manageable
It helps me be more creative
It helps me be more productive
It helps me enjoy my work more
It helps me focus on more fulfilling work
It helps me focus on the most important work
It makes me feel more motivated
It has improved my work-life balance
I wish AI could do even more on my behalf
I don't want to go back to working without AI

AI power users are emerging. Image: Microsoft, LinkedIn

Getting business and education ready for the AI future

With PwC finding that skillsets for what it terms 'AI-exposed occupations' are changing 25% faster than in roles where AI is less relevant, adopting some, if not all, of these habits could dramatically improve people's future career development.

As part of its mission to build more resilient, productive, equitable and human-centric workplaces, the World Economic Forum's [Good Work Alliance](#) focuses on deploying AI effectively and responsibly. The [Education 4.0](#) framework aims to ensure education and training systems teach AI skills and leverage AI for better learning.

Generative AI: Steam Engine of the Fourth Industrial Revolution? | Davos 2024 | Wo

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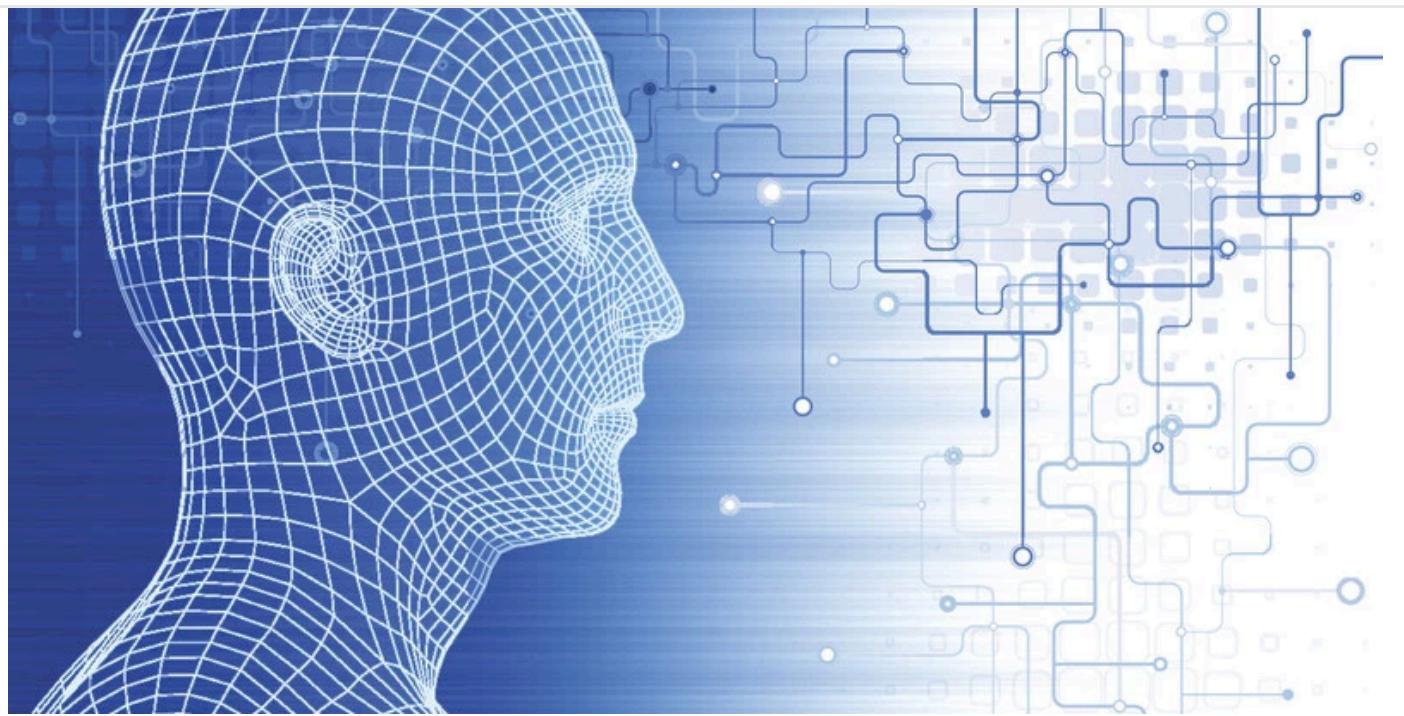
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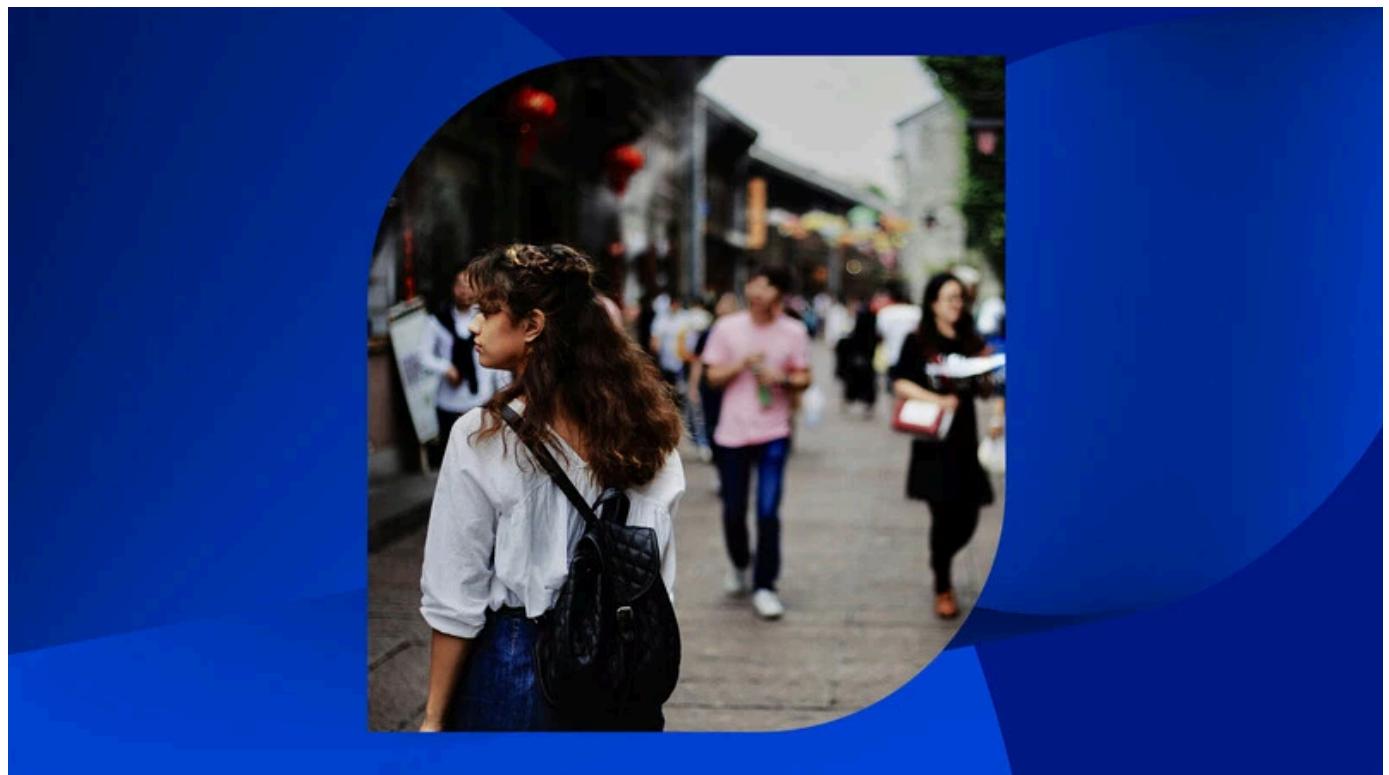
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