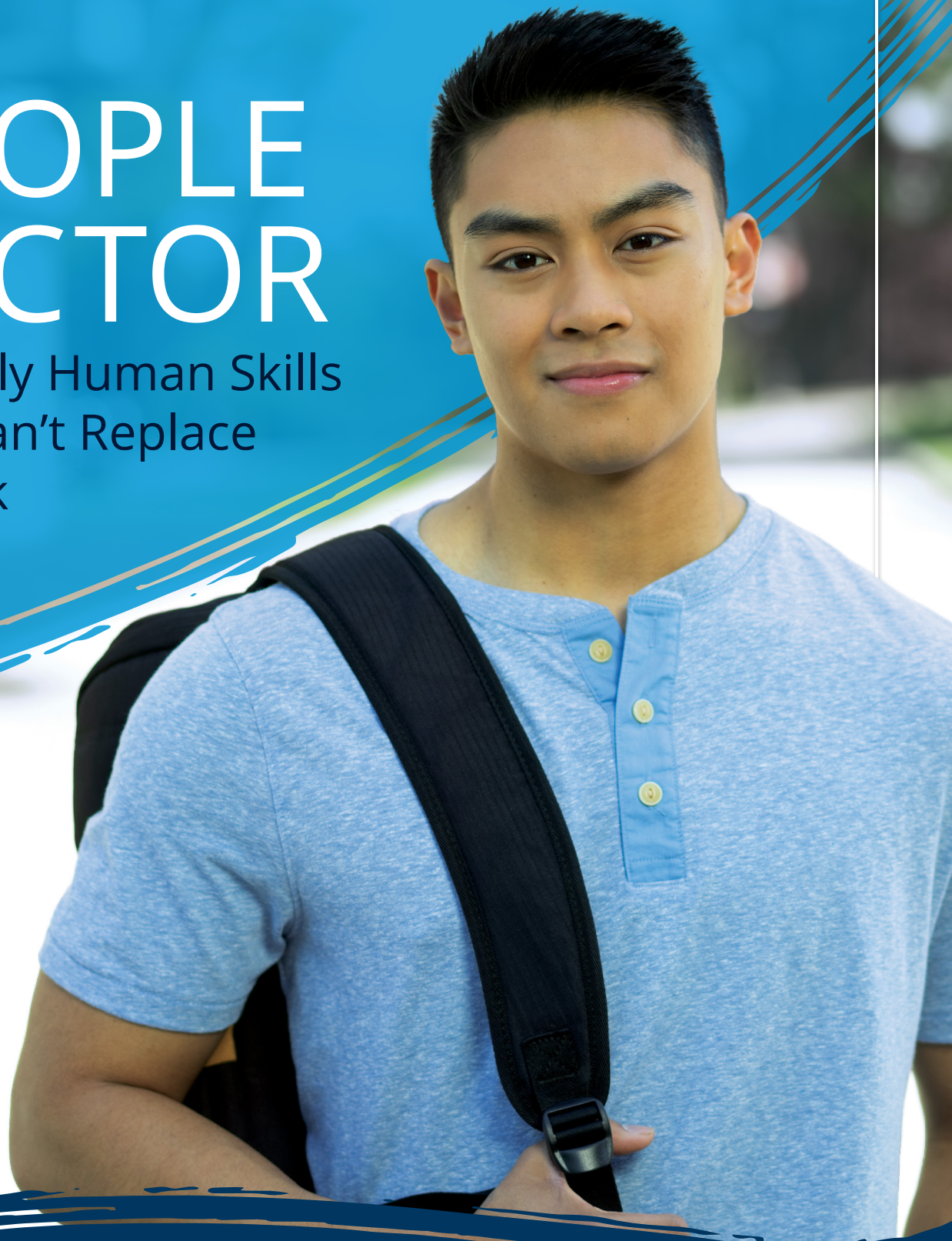# THE
PEOPLE FACTOR

Uniquely Human Skills Tech Can't Replace at Work

In late 2018, Morning Consult partnered with Cengage to survey more than 650 employers and over 1500 students to reveal insights into the impact of technology on the job market. The following is a detailed report of the results.

EMPLOYER
Survey Respondents

502
Hiring Mangers

150
HR Decision Makers

STUDENT
Survey Respondents
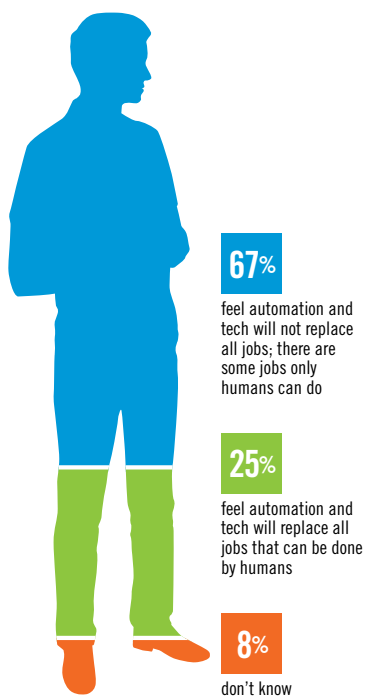
1,050
Current Students

514
Former Students

Many Students Fear Tech Will Replace Jobs

The majority of students feel that finding a position is becoming more difficult, and 1 in 4 students are concerned that technology will replace all jobs. Fortunately, that fear is slightly alleviated as students graduate and head into the workforce.
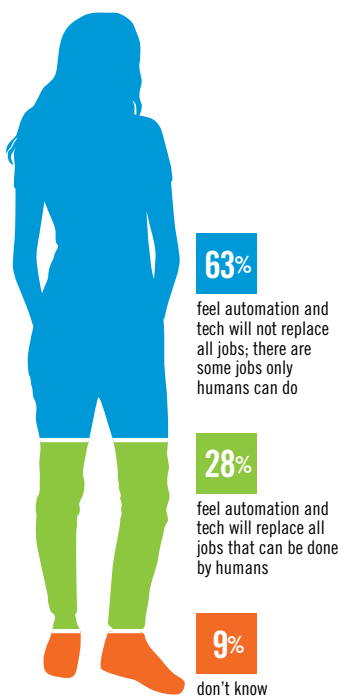
ALL STUDENTS SURVEYED

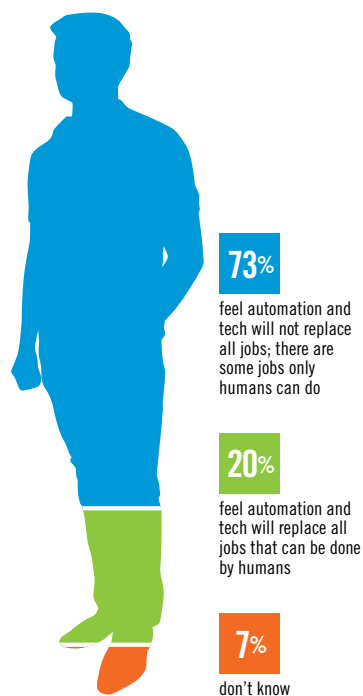25% of higher ed students believe that technology will eventually replace all jobs:

67%
feel automation and tech will not replace all jobs; there are some jobs only humans can do

25%
feel automation and tech will replace all jobs that can be done by humans

8%
don't know

GEN Z STUDENTS

This fear is even higher among Generation Z students (aged 18 – 21):

63%
feel automation and tech will not replace all jobs; there are some jobs only humans can do

28%
feel automation and tech will replace all jobs that can be done by humans

9%
don't know

FORMER STUDENTS

Good news! As students graduate and move into the workforce, these numbers get more optimistic:

73%
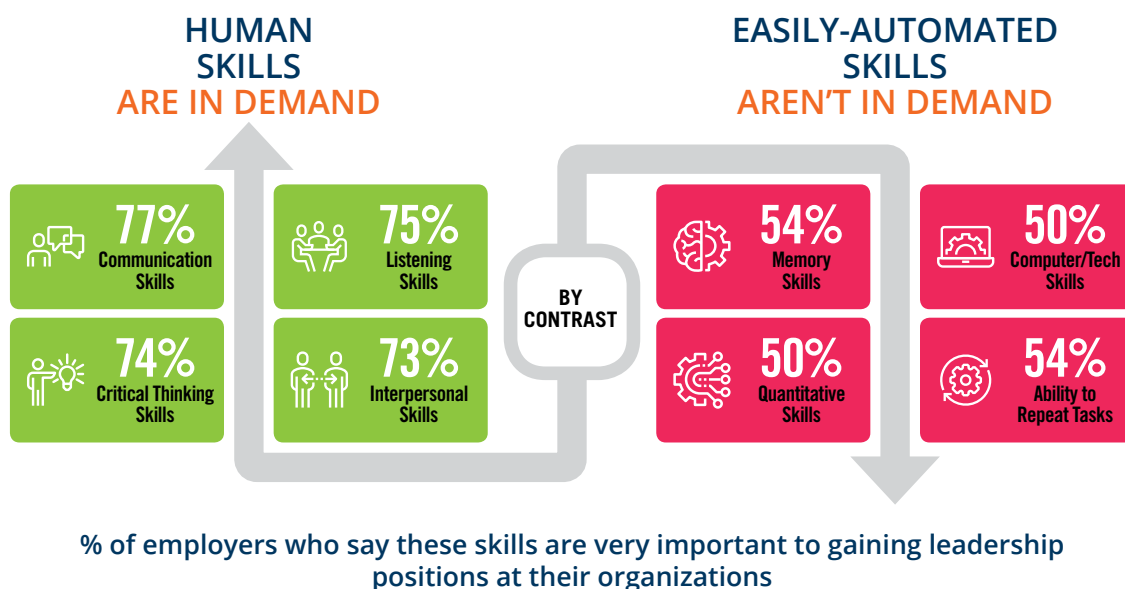feel automation and tech will not replace all jobs; there are some jobs only humans can do

20%
feel automation and tech will replace all jobs that can be done by humans

7%
don't know

Has finding a job become more or less difficult compared to your parents' generation?

65% more difficult

21% neither more or less difficult
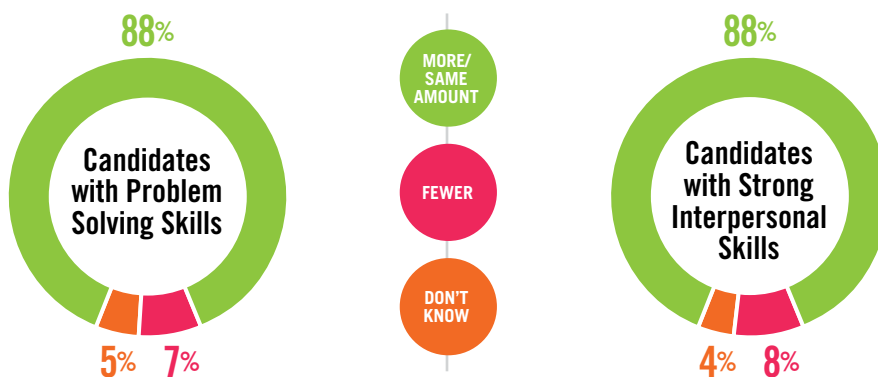
10% less difficult

4% don't know
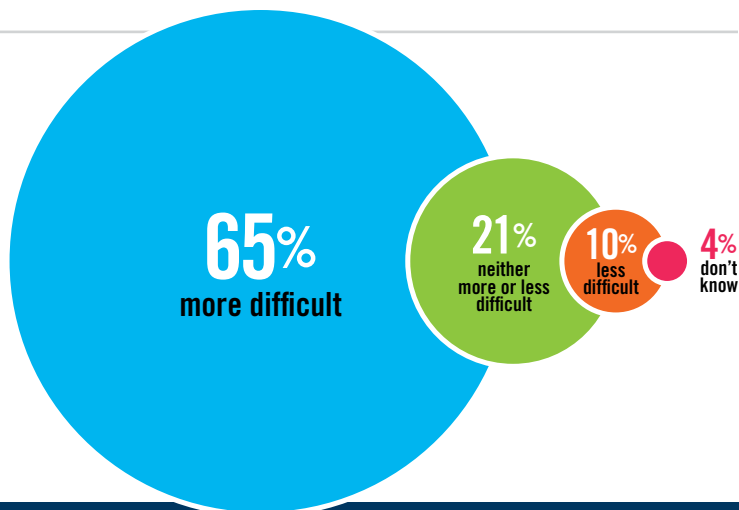
Employers Say Advances In Tech Breed Opportunity for Candidates

As we move into an automated era, uniquely human skills—competencies that can't be replicated by machines—are increasingly in demand within the workplace. Job candidates are encouraged to hone their human skills.

HUMAN SKILLS ARE IN DEMAND

77% Communication Skills

75% Listening Skills

74% Critical Thinking Skills

73% Interpersonal Skills

BY CONTRAST

EASILY-AUTOMATED SKILLS AREN'T IN DEMAND

54% Memory Skills

50% Computer/Tech Skills

50% Quantitative Skills

54% Ability to Repeat Tasks

% of employers who say these skills are very important to gaining leadership positions at their organizations

In fact, the rise of technology and automation is prompting employers to hire different types of applicants:

As a result of adopting new technologies, employers are hiring:

88% Candidates with Problem Solving Skills
5% 7%

MORE/SAME AMOUNT

FEWER

DON'T KNOW

88% Candidates with Strong Interpersonal Skills
4% 8%

TWEETABLE TAKEAWAY

While it's undeniable that technology is replacing certain jobs, the rise of automation breeds new opportunity: candidates with "uniquely human skills" are increasingly in demand.

Employers Often Have Difficulty Finding Qualified Candidates

With advances in automation, employers need candidates with uniquely human skills, but according to the survey respondents, finding these candidates isn't easy. This means job applicants can separate themselves from the pack by honing and highlighting these skills.

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants your organization values?

73%

26%

1%
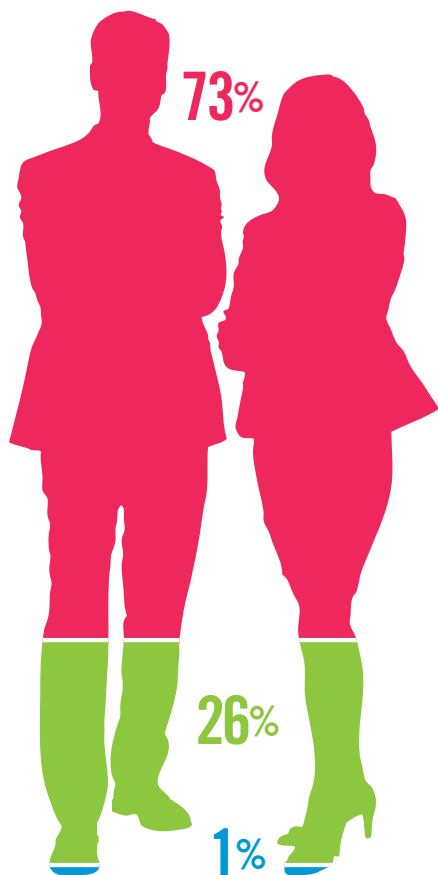
VERY OR SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT

VERY OR SOMEWHAT EASY

DON'T KNOW

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with **CRITICAL THINKING** skills?

64%   33%   3%

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with **LISTENING** skills?

54%   43%   2%

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with **COMMUNICATION** skills?

55%   42%   2%

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with **INTERPERSONAL** skills?

55%   42%   3%

TWEETABLE 🐦 TAKEAWAY

Employers need job candidates with "uniquely human skills," but finding those candidates isn't easy. Savvy students—who expect to be employed after graduation—should hone skills like critical thinking, listening, and effective communication.

# How to Properly Prep Students—According to Employers

Almost half the employers surveyed think schools should focus on teaching students skills like critical thinking and interpersonal skills, but the most important training a student can get is on-the-job-training. Employers encourage students to learn outside the classroom by gaining work experience.

61%
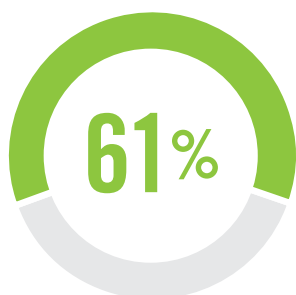
% of employers think students should **Gain Work Experience**

39%

% of HR decision-makers think schools should focus their teaching on **Critical Thinking Skills**

20%
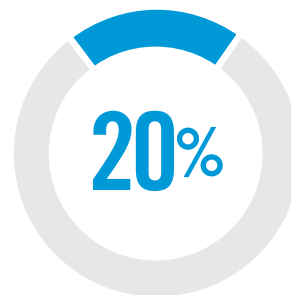
% of HR decision-makers think schools should focus their teaching on **Interpersonal Skills**

When thinking about new hires, nearly

1 IN 3 EMPLOYERS

feel that school has not adequately prepared them

1 IN 3 STUDENTS

feel that school is not adequately preparing them for work

TWEETABLE 🐦 TAKEAWAY

The best way to prep for a job? Get one. According to employers, students who had gigs before they graduated make the best employees. A part-time job—even one totally unrelated to a student's desired career—will teach valuable lessons in developing and sharpening human skills.
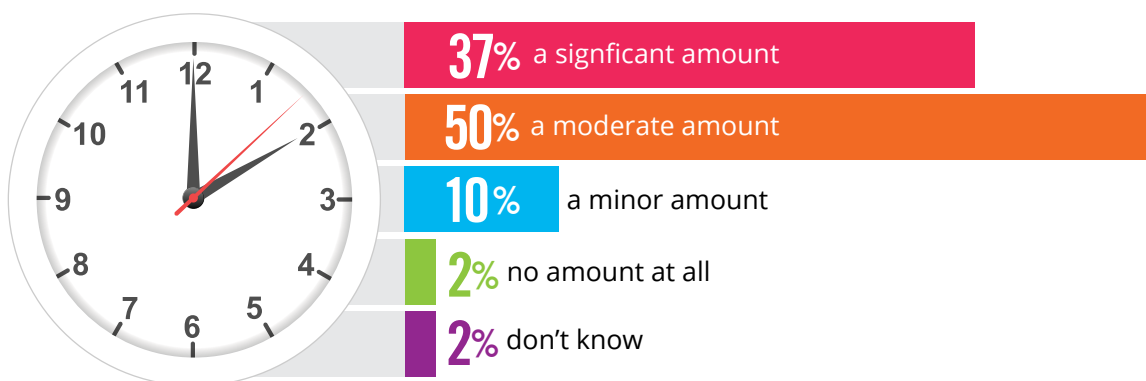
Employers Offer On-the-Job Training

To fill in gaps, employers are beginning to offer training programs for employees. But there is still work to do, because while employers value human skills, most of their training programs are for technical or job-specific skills.

How much time do you and your team invest in training new hires to acquire the necessary skills for your organization?

37% a signficant amount

50% a moderate amount

10% a minor amount

2% no amount at all

2% don't know

But, there is still work to do...

Although employers emphasize human skills over technical skills, that isn't reflected in their training programs— they are still focused on job-specific training:

Does your current place of work offer job-specific training?

81% YES

Does your current place of work offer interpersonal skill training?

50% YES

TWEETABLE TAKEAWAY

More and more employers are offering on-the-job training. Some even offer interpersonal skills training so employees can learn to collaborate and work together more effectively.

Looking Towards the Future

Things may change: employers anticipate that in the next five years, computer and tech skills will move into the most coveted skills—but many human skills will remain important.

What is Important Today

1. Listening Skills
2. Attention to Detail
3. Interpersonal Skills
4. Critical Thinking
5. Effective Communication

Top skills employers say are most important in candidates applying for positions

What Will Be Important in the Future

1. Computer and Tech Skills
2. Critical Thinking
3. Ability to Learn New Skills
4. Multi-Tasking
5. Effective Communication

Top skills employers say will become more important within the next five years

UNIQUELY HUMAN SKILLS

The Future of Work requires both
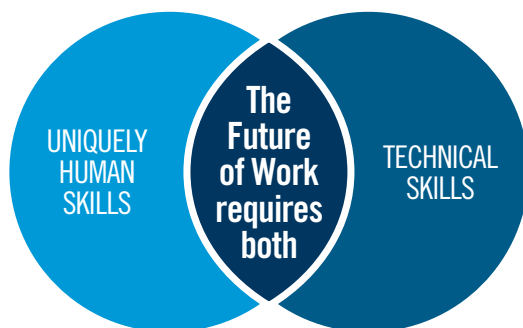
TECHNICAL SKILLS

Uniquely human skills will remain vital. The Future of Work will require a combo of human skills and tech savvy.

TWEETABLE TAKEAWAY

In the workplace of the future, employees will need a mix of human and technical skills to succeed.

Key Takeaways

1. While students are concerned about technology replacing jobs, they should be focused on honing uniquely human skills.

2. Employers say that the automated era breeds new opportunity for students who are working on their interpersonal, listening and critical thinking skills.

3. Schools and educators should be expanding their teaching outside of technical and hard skills to formalize training for human skills.

4. The best way to prepare students for work is to encourage them to gain real work experience.

CENGAGE