SKILLS IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

"Which Agile Skills are Most In-Demand in Today's Workforce?"

ScrumAlliance

BUSINESS AGILITY
INSTITUTE

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Preface

Agile has won. In technology and product teams, it has become an established way of working in millions of organizations. Effectively in some, not so much in others. But regardless, it's there.

This is a good thing. However, many people haven't figured out the implications of this.

Take the history of the car as an analogy. At first, it was a risky innovation—for daredevils and innovators subject to doubt or ridicule. Then, a luxury for those few early adopters who could afford it. Finally, through ongoing innovation and effort, an accessible commodity for the majority.

And that's where Agile is today. We've moved from early adopters to late majority—and along the way, Agile has become commoditized*, available to any and every organization. This is the natural cycle of innovation and an unavoidable consequence of the success early adopters saw with Agile.

However, this brings a new set of challenges and opportunities.

For individuals, agile-related skills and experience have become a requirement for many careers. However on their own, these skills are simply not enough. Fewer organizations are recruiting agile specialists (such as coaches), instead looking for individuals who can bring agile acumen and related skills to every role.

For agile-service firms (e.g., those selling agile coaching and training), the business model that worked for early adopters won't work for clients in the late majority. Agile isn't dead, but your business might be if you don't innovate. The client demand is still there, but to thrive in this changing market, this study makes it clear that service businesses either need new and integrated offerings or to deliver current agile services at competitive price points.

If it helps, consider the car industry. While many people will buy a good-quality but affordable Toyota, others will spend 10x as much on an Aston Martin. While they are functionally the same product**, the value lies in their subjective differences. Think of it this way, the person buying an Aston Martin isn't buying it because they need a car. What you need to decide is if your clients need an affordable Toyota or a high-performance Aston Martin.

For organizations, it means more options and greater opportunities. Agile needs to be a part of your DNA. But just because you've been "doing agile" for 5-years doesn't mean you can move on. To fully realize the benefits***, you need to broaden your perspective and look at agility in the context of the entire business. However, as agile-related skills become more common, it has become harder to identify and differentiate the people with great skills—and the right combination of skills.

There is an open question about how much of this is a true inflection point vs. an economic knee-jerk reaction. Since the pandemic, organizations are playing by new rules. And leaders are stressed—it's hard to sustain a business when you don't really know what's coming next. But, as this report shows, agility is a competitive advantage and its the humanity in organizations that makes a difference.

This is the new challenge to be risen to.

Evan Leybourn,
Cofounder, Business Agility Institute

* Commoditization doesn't mean low-value or low-effort—your agility requires ongoing investment and focus to sustain and improve.
** I know some of you will take offence at that statement, but bear with me.
*** Other reports have shown that business agility results in significant improvements in, amongst other things, employee engagement (24% higher on average), financial performance (20-30% increase), and operational efficiency (30-50% decrease in governance overheads).

Key Findings

Answering the question *"Which skills are most in demand in today's workforce?"* is not straightforward.

The new world of work is characterized by several key trends, including the growing significance of **human skills**, the evolving demand for **cross-skilled individuals**, and the shift toward **skill-based learning**.

Within this context, while agile is necessary, it is not sufficient. Regardless of the role, organizations are seeking candidates who have strong agile acumen **alongside** other skills—whether they be human skills like communication, emotional intelligence, and strategic thinking, or functional skills such as software engineering and facilitation.

Important Note: *Skill is not the same as Role.*

For example, the skill of coaching. Organizations need managers with coaching skills - but that doesn't mean an organization needs Agile Coaches.

And while the demand for specific roles is in constant flux, one thing is certain: the new world of work is here to stay. And organizations that are successful are those that invest in developing the skills that their employees need.

Top 5 Takeaways

1 **Human skills are just as important, if not more important, than functional skills in the new world of work**. This includes skills such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity. Overall, the demand for human skills is 34% higher than functional skills.

2 **Organizations are expecting individuals to have multiple deep skill capabilities, not just one**. For example, a Scrum Master with deep agile AND technical expertise or a Manager with deep financial management AND coaching skills. However, organizations are finding it difficult to recruit individuals with the right combination of skills.

Key Findings

3 Agile acumen (practical knowledge and experience) is seen as a crucial skill within most roles and is the 2nd most demanded functional skill. For example, a sales representative with agile acumen can apply agile principles and practices to their work on closing deals.

4 The need for agile coaching (as both a role and skill) is evolving. **As a dedicated role, demand for agile coaches is low** (18% of organizations). However, the skill of coaching is sought after within other roles. For example, organizations are seeking managers with coaching skills.

5 Education pathways need to move towards skill-based learning over role-based learning. People should be trained in the skills that they need to perform across a variety of roles, rather than being trained for a specific role.

ⓘ *Important Note: Throughout this report we distinguish between Human skills that relate to people (sometimes referred to as 'Durable' or 'Soft' skills) and Functional skills (also called 'Mechanical' or 'Work' skills) that are needed for a particular job.*
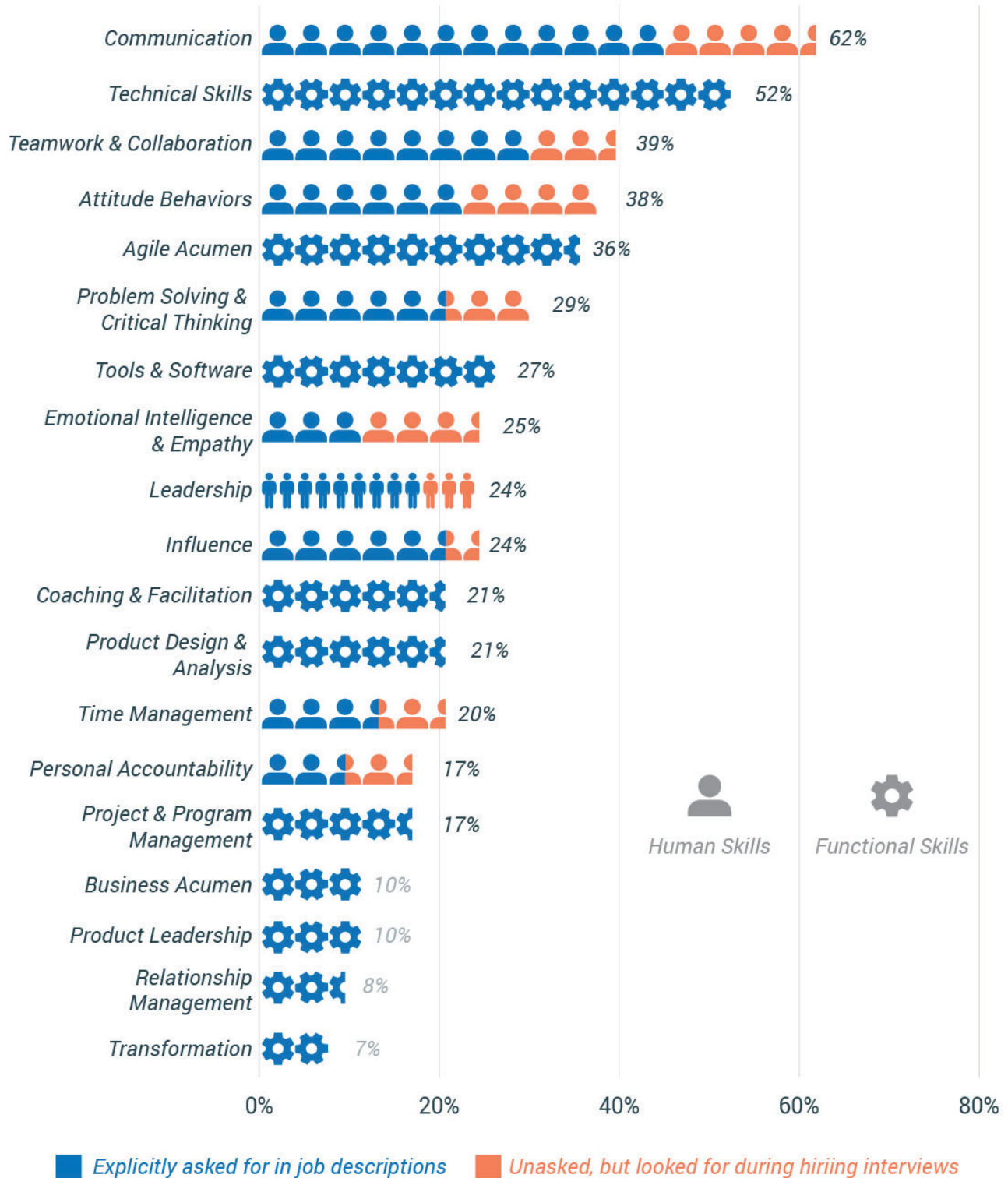
ⓘ *Important Note: See Appendix A and B for a complete list of skills and subskills referenced in this report.*

As businesses continue to seek improved productivity and performance, individuals with the right combination of **skills and experience become harder to find.**

% of participating organizations looking for each skill

Skill	%
Communication	62%
Technical Skills	52%
Teamwork & Collaboration	39%
Attitude Behaviors	38%
Agile Acumen	36%
Problem Solving & Critical Thinking	29%
Tools & Software	27%
Emotional Intelligence & Empathy	25%
Leadership	24%
Influence	24%
Coaching & Facilitation	21%
Product Design & Analysis	21%
Time Management	20%
Personal Accountability	17%
Project & Program Management	17%
Business Acumen	10%
Product Leadership	10%
Relationship Management	8%
Transformation	7%

Human Skills　　Functional Skills

■ Explicitly asked for in job descriptions　　■ Unasked, but looked for during hiriing interviews

In-Demand Skills for Agilists in 2023

The Top Human Skills in 2023

Human skills, also known as soft skills, are the personal attributes and social graces that allow people to interact effectively with others.

Participating organizations have identified 9 human skills (and 23 subskills) that are in highest demand. Of special interest:

- **Communication** continues to be the most important skill, both today and historically. Even when not explicitly required, proficiency in communication is more likely to pay off than any other skill.

- **Attitude Behaviors** is a broad category encompassing how an individual expresses their mindsets. While these attributes have not historically been in high demand, employers today are seeking them as priorities, as it is easier and more important to hire someone with a great mindset than to improve a poor one later.

The relative importance of human skills reinforces the old adage 'hire for attitude and teach the skills'. This may also reflect how difficult it is to predict the functional skills needed in the future.

i

Data note: Many of the human skills that organizations look for are implicit (i.e. looked for during interviews) rather than explicitly listed in job descriptions.

The Top Functional Skills in 2023

Functional skills are the specific knowledge and abilities needed to perform a particular task or job. They are often technical in nature and can be learned through formal education, training, or on-the-job experience. Functional skills are typically quantifiable and can be measured through tests or certifications.

While technical skills (such as software engineering, data, and cloud computing) remain in high demand, organizations are expecting individuals to also have agile and business acumen to apply these skills using modern ways of working to achieve better business outcomes.

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Data note: Participating individuals and organizations were highly skewed towards product and technology sectors.

In other words, organizations are no longer just looking for employees who can "*do what they were hired for.*" They are looking for employees who can think critically, solve problems, and adapt to change.

The Importance of "and"

Why Have This "or" That, When You Can Have Both?

The most important finding of this report is that people need to have multiple deep skill capabilities, not just one. The classic depiction of **T-shaped** skills (where the depth of the person's primary role-skillset is the upright of the 'T' shape, and the breadth of supporting skills represents the crossbar of the 'T') is now seen as insufficient.

Instead, we are seeing the rise of the **pi-shaped skills**. Demand from organizations for individuals with expertise in two (or more) primary skills, alongside the breadth of complementary skills.

T-shaped Professional
Moderate ability in a broad set of skills & deep ability in a core competency

Pi-shaped Professional
Moderate ability in a broad set of skills & deep ability in two (2) or more core competencies

Conventional Advice

Current Market Demand

Some Common Examples That Were Identified Include:

Good communication skills AND a high level of technical understanding

Scrum master with stakeholder management AND technical experience

Combination of <tech 1> AND <tech 2> skills

Combination of agile knowledge AND enterprise-level business processes

*Blend of creativity AND commercial skills*

Experience with multiple business/functional areas

In other words, the era of the individual being just a Scrum Master or Agile Coach is over. While the exact **combination** of primary skills differed between participating organizations, many organizations are looking for multidisciplinary people with complementary skills.

However, many participating organizations have found it difficult to find individuals with the right combination of skills. They report that they can easily find individuals with either of the needed skills, but not both. This challenge in hiring has led many organisations to invest substantial time and effort to develop cross-skilled individuals internally.

On a Scale of 1-5, How Hard is it to Find Someone with ALL of These Skills

1	2	3	4	5
2%	5%	29%	43%	21%
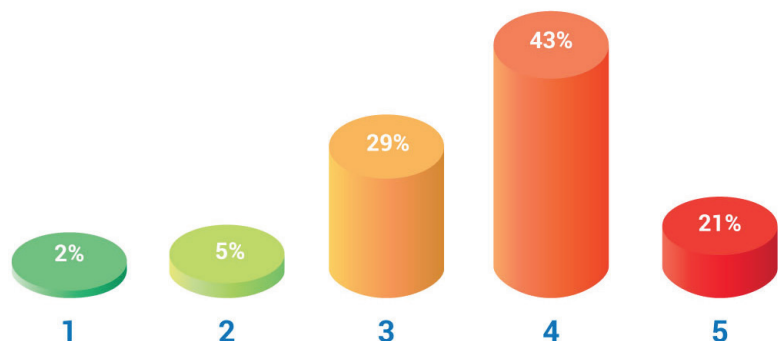
Skills Gaps for the Future of Work

The report highlights several mismatches between the skills that organizations are most seeking and the skills that people are investing in developing. This underinvestment in the skills that are in highest demand is making it difficult for individuals to be competitive in the job market.

Which Skills Are Companies Finding Hardest to Acquire?

Within the Technical Skill group, finding individuals with strong software engineering skills was very difficult—especially for roles such as Scrum Master or Agile Coach.

Similarly, within Agile Acumen, participating organizations report difficulty in finding people with deep understanding and experience with Agile Methods & Frameworks. This further indicates that organizations continue to see the relevance of these skills in non-agile roles.

% of participating organizations

The skills that people are investing in developing are different from the skills that organizations actually need.

There is a significant gap when comparing the skills that individuals are actively learning to the skills that organizations are asking for in their job descriptions.

While many of these skills are foundational and included in other skill sets, our research suggests that these need to be made more visible to employers. *For example, a good Agile Coach should also have strong written and verbal communication skills.*

difference between skill demand and professional development focus areas
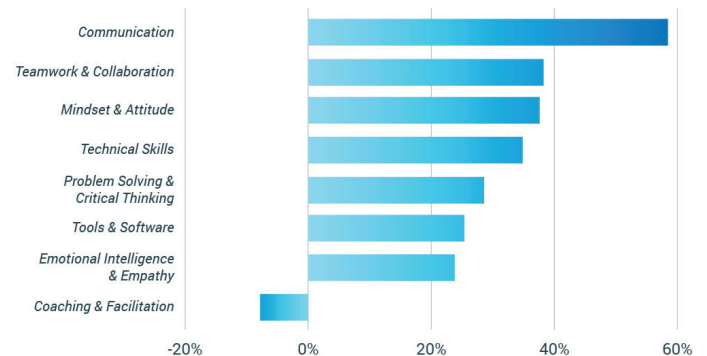
Key takeaway:

In addition to specific skills, organizations want people to have domain and function expertise. For example, people who coach or manage software teams should have greater software experience themselves.

As these foundational skills are applicable across a wide range of roles and job titles (e.g., Coach, Scrum Master, Product Owner), developing these skills **makes people more adaptable and broadly skilled** than doubling down on role-specific skills, which are less transferable. People who can clearly demonstrate these skills will be a much better fit for what the market is currently looking for.

Agile organizations are able to quickly identify and capitalize on new opportunities, while also mitigating risks and adapting to new challenges. This isn't easy, so organizations look for individuals who can bring this experience to business and product teams.

Whether it comes through experience in coaching individuals, facilitation of teams, or product leadership; these skills are in demand by organizations to help teams to deliver value to customers quickly and efficiently.

Agile Acumen is the deep understanding of and experience with agile principles, practices, and frameworks. Scrum Masters, and other practitioners, must be able to see the big picture and understand how agile can be used to achieve strategic goals.

The demand for Agile Acumen is high (36%) across all roles—not just traditional agile roles, such as Scrum Masters and Product Owners. Broadly, the demand for Agile Acumen consists of: Agile Techniques & Practices, Agile Methods & Frameworks, Scrum Mastery, and Metrics & Measures.

Agile Techniques & Practices
28.1%

Scrum Mastery
12.3%

Metrics & Measures
6.1%

Agile Methods & Frameworks
53.5%
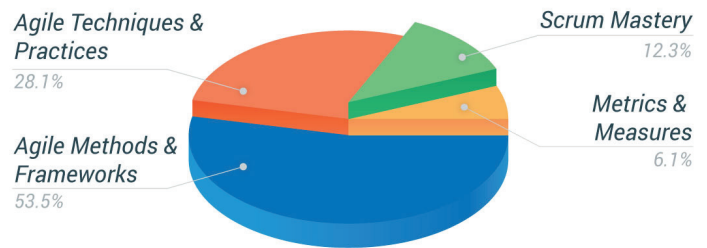
Product Leadership skills are those needed to represent the customer's needs and interests within the development team. This also includes prioritizing work and making decisions on behalf of the customer.

Overall, within Product Leadership, Product Ownership skills were more than twice as sought after than Product Management skills.

Product Management
30.8%

Product Ownership
69.2%
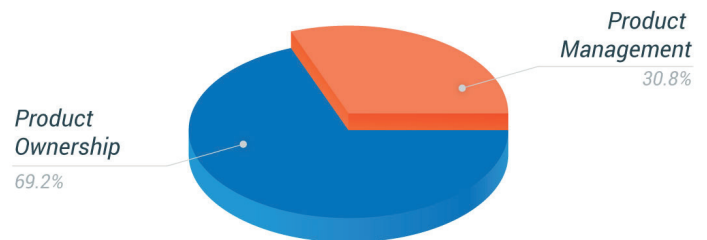
Coaching and Facilitation are essential skills for helping teams to learn, grow, and perform at their best. A strong coach can help a team to learn how to work together more effectively and adopt new ways of working to be significantly more productive.

Coaching an individual, team, or organization is complex and requires multiple skills and subskills. 21% of organizations are actively seeking coaching skills in their staff. These include: Coaching, Facilitation, and Mentorship.

Coaching
33.3%

Mentorship
10.3%

Facilitation
56.4%

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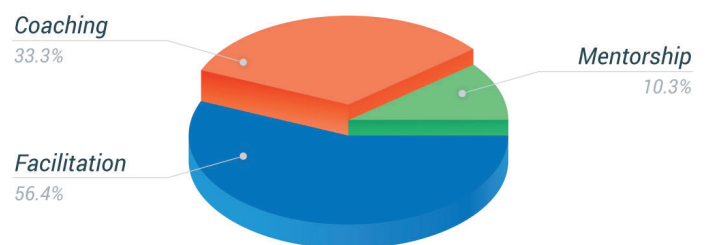
Important note: Skills are not the same as roles. The skills relating to coaching, product ownership, or scrum mastery are applicable to multiple roles; not just Agile Coaches, Product Owners, and Scrum Masters.

At its core, a business is an interconnected network of people and teams. Making human skills, such as communication skills, emotional intelligence, and influence essential for an organization to be effective at achieving its strategic goals.

Communication skill is the ability to effectively convey your thoughts and ideas to others. A scrum master with good communication skill will be able to explain the best approaches for creating valuable products to their colleagues concisely. They will also be able to listen to the colleagues' needs and concerns to build rapport with them.

Within communication skills, there are three specific areas that organizations are looking for. Written and Verbal Communication, Active Listening, and Presentation Skills. Of these, organizations report that strong Written and Verbal Communication is one of the hardest skills to find in their candidates.

Financial Services and Technology firms were, on average, more likely to ask for Communication Skills than other industries.

Active Listening
13.2%

Presentation Skills
8.8%

Written & Verbal Communication
77.9%

Emotional Intelligence and Empathy is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. People with high emotional intelligence empathize with others, build rapport, and resolve conflicts effectively. An agile coach with high emotional intelligence will be able to motivate and inspire their team members. They will also be able to resolve conflict effectively and create a positive work environment.

Overall, emotional Intelligence and Empathy was one of the top skills needed by organizations — requested by 24.6% of organizations.

Influence is the ability to persuade others to take a certain action or see things from your perspective. People with high influence can build trust, communicate effectively, and negotiate effectively. A Product Owner with high influence will be able to persuade others to support their vision and goals. They will also be able to build consensus and get people working together towards a common goal.

Within influence, organizations need four specific subskills: Negotiation, Motivational, Conflict Resolution, and Interpersonal Skills.

Healthcare firms were, on average, more likely to ask for Influence Skills than other industries.

Negotiation
18.4%

Motivational
14.9%

Conflict Resolution
26.4%

Interpersonal Skills
40.2%
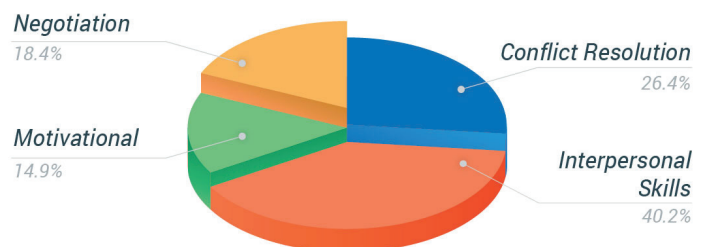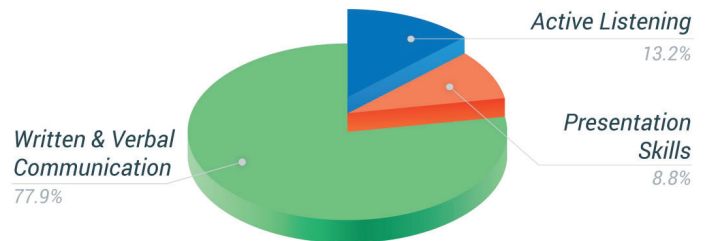
Business agility is a set of organizational capabilities, behaviors, and ways of working that affords your business the freedom, flexibility, and resilience to achieve its purpose. No matter what the future brings.

For organizations working towards this, business acumen, transformation skills, and leadership skills are essential. With this, professionals make more informed decisions, build high-performing teams, and help the organization achieve its strategic goals.

Business Acumen enables informed decision making that is beneficial for the organization. For example, a product owner with strong business acumen will be able to understand the financial implications of a new product or service launch and make a decision that is in the best interests of the company.

While the majority of companies participating in this study were product and technology focused, finding individuals with both technical skills and business acumen was in demand by over 10% of companies.

It was also one the hardest skillsets for organizations to find.

Leadership skills include the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide others to achieve common goals. For example, a Scrum Master with strong leadership skills is able to create a positive work environment, set clear expectations, and provide feedback that helps team members to grow and develop.

While there are many skills within leadership, the two that stood out the most: Managing People and Building & Leading Teams.

Overall, organizations were able to find individuals with these skills without too much difficulty.

Transformation skills are needed by organizations to improve its performance or adapt to new market conditions. Transformation can involve changes to the organization's structure, strategy, culture, and processes. An agile coach with good transformation skills can effectively guide their organizations through periods of change.

In raw numbers, the demand for transformation skills is low. However, for those few roles that exist, organizations have reported significant challenges in finding individuals with these skills. Excluding specialist & niche skills, individuals with strong transformation skills are the rarest skills on the market right now.

Managing People
25.4%

Building &
Leading Teams
74.6%
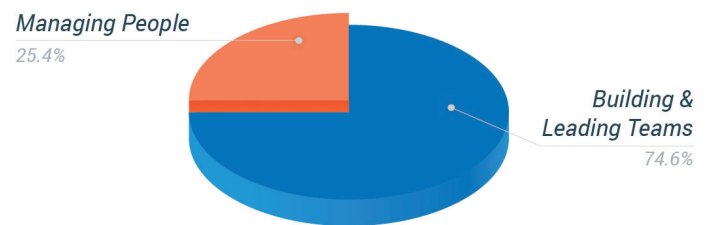
Key takeaway:

While not a skill per se, many organizations identified the need for specific business and domain expertise. That is, for individuals to have experience in a particular area or industry in addition to the skills that the role requires.

The most "in-demand" skill set, technical skills are essential for success in many different industries and roles. Technical skills are the specialized knowledge and expertise required to perform specific tasks and use specific tools and programs. Supporting this, the skills associated with tools and software enable the use of enabling software applications or tools effectively.

Technical Skills allow people to perform their jobs more efficiently and effectively. For example, a software engineer with strong technical skills will be able to write code more quickly and accurately than someone with weaker technical skills.

Just as importantly, a scrum master or agile coach with strong technical skills will be better able to understand the challenges faced by the team, provide meaningful feedback, help the team improve their technical skills, and build trust with the team.

Data 19.7%

Cloud Computing 9.6%

A.I. & Machine Learning 1.1%

DevOps 10.6%

Software Engineering 59.0%
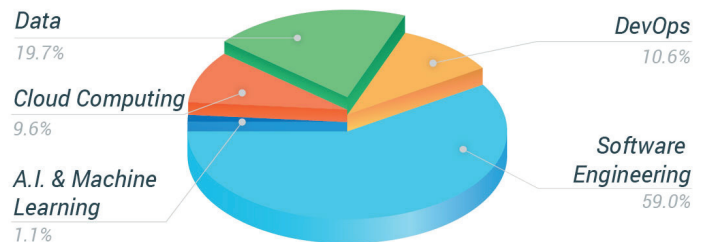
> **i**
> *Data note:* There are many different types of technical skills depending on the products that a company provides and the industry they are in. In this report, respondents skewed highly towards technology products, so, while the skills lists are most technology related, the principle applies to any domain.

Within technical skills, there are 5 specific areas that organizations were looking for. AI & Machine Learning, Cloud Computing, Data, Dev Ops, and Software Engineering.

Of these, organizations report that Software Engineering skills are some one of the hardest to find in their candidates.

> **i**
> *Data note: While AI & Machine Learning was only 1% in the current report, we expect this to grow rapidly as this is rated as 2nd in the top 10 emerging technologies for 2023 by the World Economic Forum. We will be watching this closely in the near future.*

Skills relating to **Tools and Software** increased the productivity and efficiency of individuals (and teams) while also improving the quality of work. For example, an agile coach or scrum master with strong tool skills can set up and enable collaboration software for their teams. This can be especially important in fields where precision and accuracy are critical, such as engineering, design, and healthcare.

While very few individuals identified tooling skills as important, over 27% of organizations were explicitly looking for these skills.
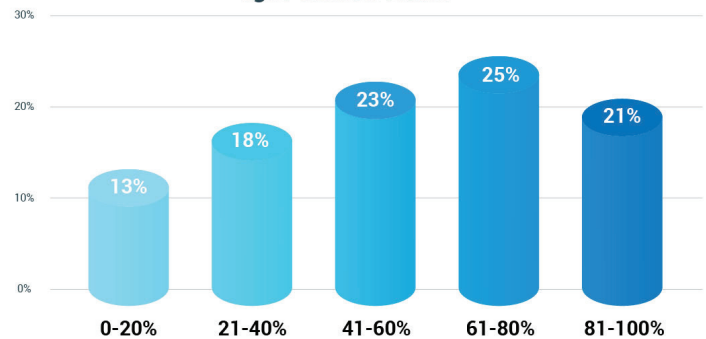
Why are People with these Skills Hard to Find?

Traditionally, organizations have placed higher value on functional skills than on human skills. Job advertisements largely highlight the required functional skills, and in response, people focus their applications on showcasing those skills, with human skills being either noted only in passing or barely at all. However, as organizations shift towards agile ways of working, and ultimately business agility, human skills have elevated to equal prominence, or even greater importance than functional skills.

This report shows that most organizations expect more than half of their employees to work using agile-related skills, and that this number is growing, with 64% of organizations reporting an increase in demand for these skills in the last year. With this increased demand, organizations are facing a challenge in finding people with the depth of skills and experience that they are looking for.

How has the demand for agile-related skills changed in your organization over the past year?

Increased
63.8%

Decreased
3.9%

Stayed the Same
32.2%
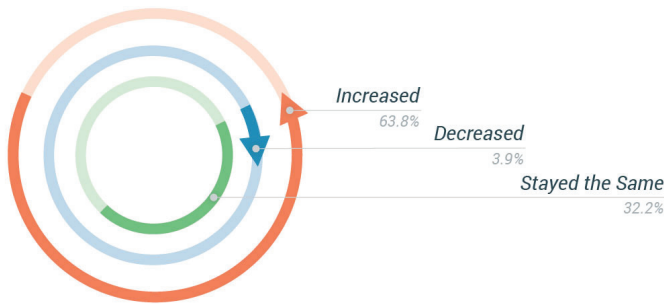
What percentage of the organization is expected to work using agile-related skills?

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
13%	18%	23%	25%	21%

Key finding:

Given the speed at which the demand for agility has grown, there simply hasn't been enough time for people to develop the relevant skills. So, there just aren't enough people with the depth of experience that organizations are looking for.

Organizations need to:

• Invest in educating staff in skills complimentary to their job function—but also give people opportunities to develop experience.

• Construct job advertisements that better communicate the human skills required not just for the role but by the organization.

• Assess both human and functional skill proficiency to determine the suitability of candidates—in turn, this requires different expertise in hiring managers.

The Importance of Education

Overall, education remains a key differentiator in employment opportunities. While all organizations value both experience and education, individuals with proven agile education generally earn more and are able to apply these skills in their day-to-day work.
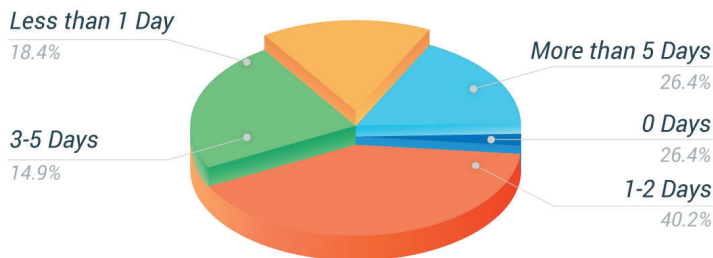
Even individuals who are satisfied with their current role and career highlight the importance of ongoing skill development for both job effectiveness and job satisfaction.

i *Data note:* The data on this page reflects individual experiences, rather than company demand.

On a scale of 1-5, how important are the skills learned in your agile training for your day-to-day work?

- 1: 7%
- 2: 8%
- 3: 21%
- 4: 31%
- 5: 32%
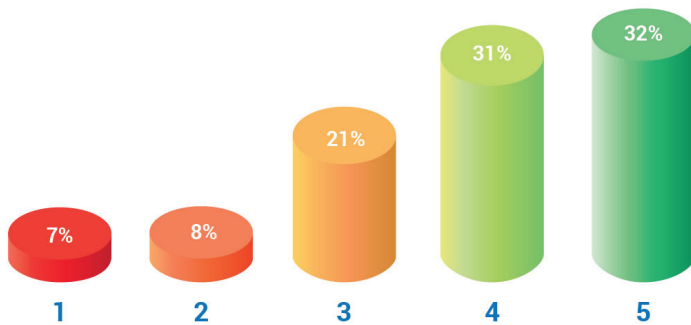
How many days a month do you spend on your own ongoing professional development?

- Less than 1 Day 18.4%
- 3-5 Days 14.9%
- More than 5 Days 26.4%
- 0 Days 26.4%
- 1-2 Days 40.2%

[I want to] continue to grow and learn a multitude of different subjects.

I love my current job … but want to continue learning.

Only 30% of individuals have their professional development fully funded by their employer.

There is a geographic element to who pays for education. Individuals from Asia (excluding Japan), India, and Australia are more likely to pay for their own professional development. Whereas individuals from Europe are much more likely to have their professional development funded by their employer.

Does your company pay for your professional development?

- Yes 30.1%
- Partially 40.0%
- No, I pay for myself 29.9%
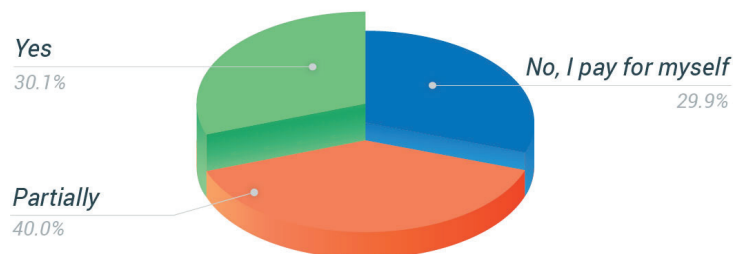
The Role Certifications Play

Certifiably Employable

Certifications continue to play an important role in both an individual's career and company hiring decisions.

While demonstrating relevant skills and experience is the primary factor in hiring decisions, certifications were reported to help individuals stand out from other candidates.

Only 23% of hiring managers stated that certifications were **not important** during the recruitment process. This is in stark contrast to the **41% of individuals** who didn't believe they were important.

On a scale of 1-5, how important were your certifications during the hiring process?

As reported by Individual Contributors
As reported by Hiring Managers

Scale	Individual Contributors	Hiring Managers
1	25%	9%
2	16%	14%
3	22%	38%
4	20%	23%
5	17%	16%

Certifiable Pay Increase

Agile skills and certifications can lead to higher earning potential for individuals, even outside of traditional agile roles.

For agile roles, **55% of organizations will pay higher salaries for individuals with relevant certifications** compared to a non-certified counterpart.

And this applies outside of "agile" roles, such as Scrum Master, as well. 69% of organizations state that they pay higher salaries for any individual with demonstrated agile skills (certified or not)—regardless of the role they are being hired for.

This shows that while certifications are important, the skills from those certifications are even more valuable.

Do you pay higher salaries for successful candidates who hold a certification relevant to the role?

No
44.6%

Yes
55.4%

Are you willing to pay more for non-agile professionals with agile skills and experience?

No
30.6%

Yes
69.4%

Key takeaway:

Certifications, along with demonstrated experience, contribute to higher salaries.

Agile Jobs in the Market
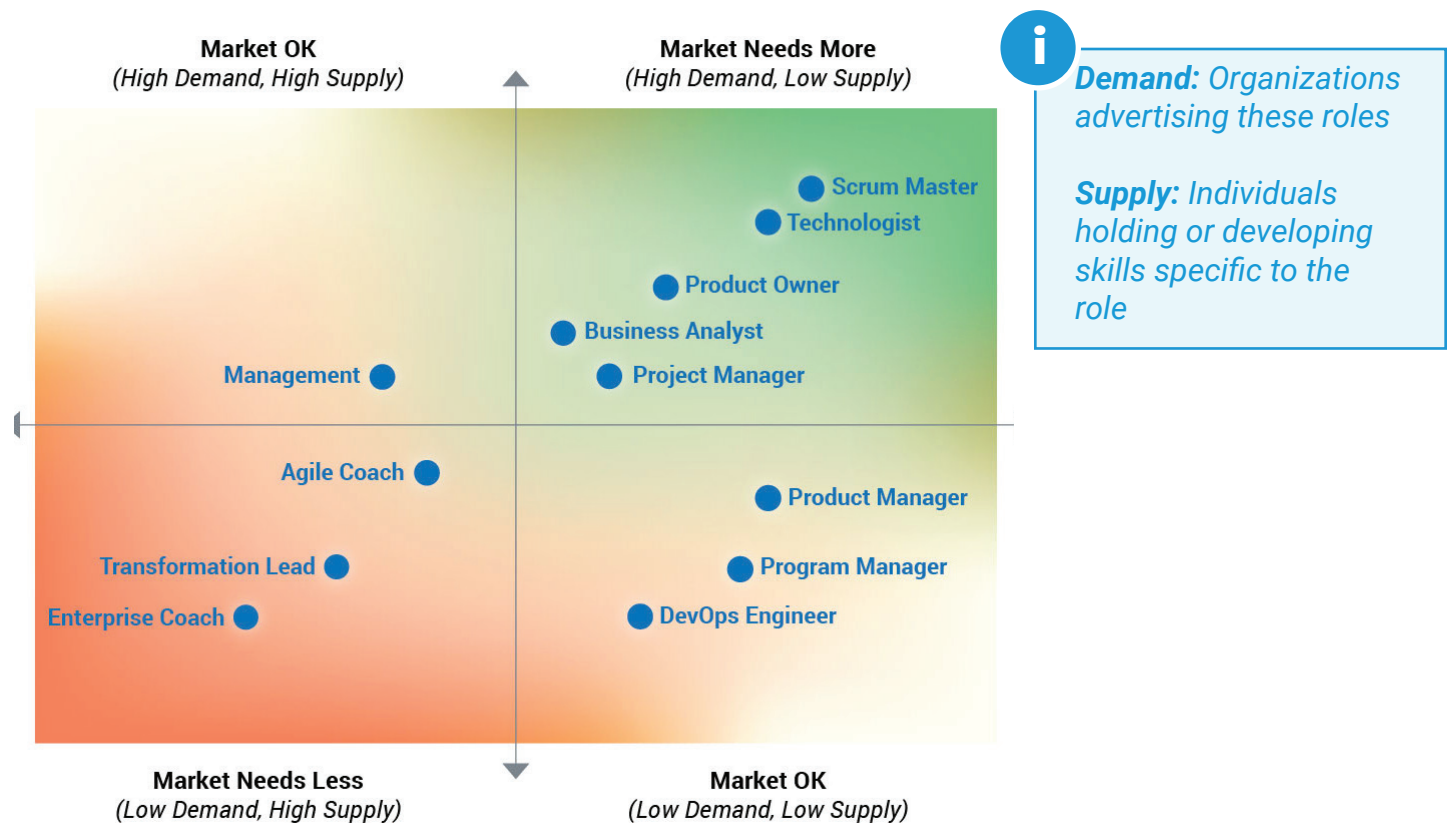
While the skills associated with agility are in demand across all roles and job descriptions, demand for specific agile roles is highly variable. Overall, there are almost twice as many companies looking for Scrum Masters (45% of participating organizations) than Product Owners (24% of organizations). And 3 times more than those looking for Agile Coaches (18% of organizations).

When compared against the professional development goals of individuals, skills relating to Enterprise Coaching, Agile Coaching, and Project Management roles were over supplied. Meaning there are likely more people developing role-specific skills than there are direct employment opportunities for them.

Supply and Demand of Agile Jobs in the Market

Market OK
(High Demand, High Supply)

Market Needs More
(High Demand, Low Supply)

- Scrum Master
- Technologist
- Product Owner
- Business Analyst
- Management
- Project Manager
- Agile Coach
- Product Manager
- Transformation Lead
- Program Manager
- Enterprise Coach
- DevOps Engineer

Market Needs Less
(Low Demand, High Supply)

Market OK
(Low Demand, Low Supply)

> ⓘ **Demand:** *Organizations advertising these roles*
>
> **Supply:** *Individuals holding or developing skills specific to the role*

However, this data is misleading in two ways:

- **Skill is not the same as Role**. Many skills are highly transferable. An individual undertaking professional development in coaching skills can apply these skills in numerous roles—not just as an Agile Coach.

- **The importance of "and"**. This data does not accurately capture the need for multiple skills within agile roles. i.e., Scrum Masters with technical experience and Business managers with coaching skills.

For both reasons, while demands for roles may be lower, **there is ongoing and growing demand for the skills related to these roles.**

Resolving the Contradictions

This study reveals a set of findings that appear at first glance to be contradictory. We see the following three of particular interest:

#1: Significantly higher demand for Agile Acumen (skill) and experience than role-based skills (e.g., Scrum Mastery or Product Ownership).

#2: High demand for Agile Acumen (skill) in all individuals but lower demand for transformation support from Agile Coaches (role).

#3: High demand for skills that promote agility but low agile capability in many organizations.

There are a few possible explanations for this.

• Organizations are looking for agile skills as a complementary part of all roles (i.e., coaches with technical skills or delivery leads with coaching skills).

• The inverse is also true. Delivery-facing agile roles, such as Scrum Masters, are being expected to be technical experts in addition to their agile responsibilities.

• Agile coaches are often not seen as "doing roles." In tough economic times, organizations scale back to core and essential components only (i.e., delivery) to secure themselves financially.

• Agile has become business-as-usual. People are expected to know and operate in this way, regardless of role. Agile is no longer seen as something new that needs specialized experts to support the organization with. Rather, the expectation is that people are, or should be, up to speed already.

• Leaders think that agile at the individual and team level is sufficient. But do not understand or see the constraint to agility within the organizational system.

Individuals wishing to pursue agile careers should consider cross-skilling and present themselves as multidisciplinary specialists. For example, being 1) specialists in agile with relevant technical or domain expertise (e.g., software engineering), 2) specialists in business agility to distinguish it from team-level agile, or 3) specialists in product design using agile techniques.
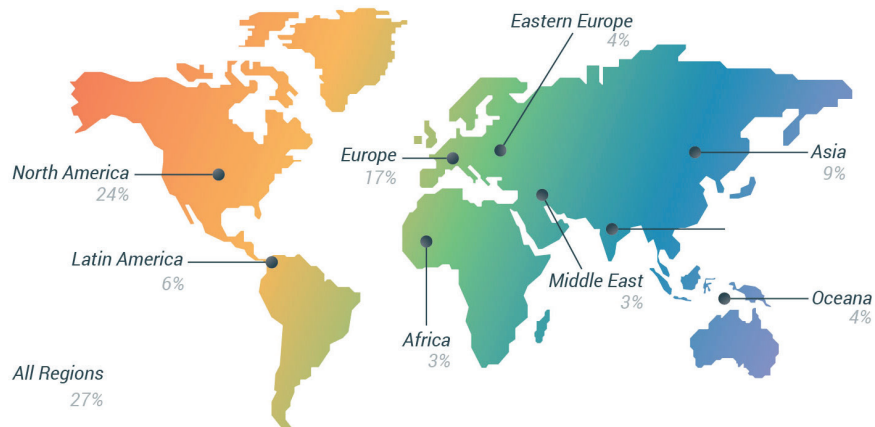
However, while organizations refuse to address the systemic and business-level constraints to agility, the ability for individuals to fully utilize their skills will be limited.

Demographics

Over eleven-hundred individuals (1,128) and three hundred companies (308) participated in this study to help answer the question: "*Which skills are most in demand in today's workforce?*". Participating organizations were diverse, ranging from 6 to 600,000 employees, spanning 23 industries, across 75 countries. Survey responses were cross referenced against publicly available job descriptions providing statistical validation—223 in total.

> **i** **Data Note:** *Participating individuals and organizations were highly skewed towards product and technology sectors and do not reflect a random sample of companies.*
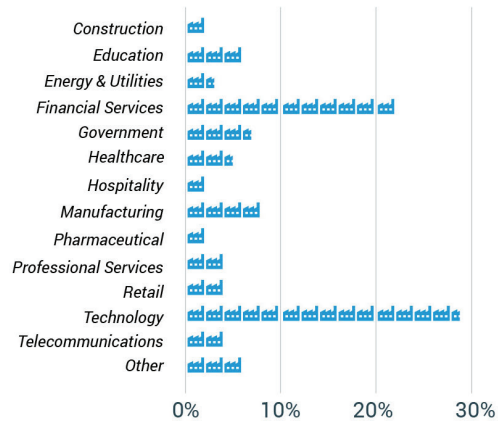
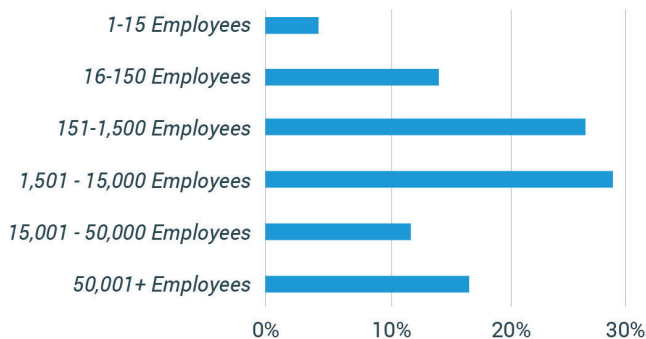## % of Participating Organizations by Operating Region

Eastern Europe 4%
Europe 17%
Asia 9%
North America 24%
Latin America 6%
Middle East 3%
Oceana 4%
Africa 3%
All Regions 27%

% of Survey Responses from Managers & Individual Contributors

Manager 27.3%

Individual 72.7%

% of Participating Organizations by Industry

- Construction
- Education
- Energy & Utilities
- Financial Services
- Government
- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Manufacturing
- Pharmaceutical
- Professional Services
- Retail
- Technology
- Telecommunications
- Other

(0% — 10% — 20% — 30%)

% Of Participating Organizations by Size

- 1-15 Employees
- 16-150 Employees
- 151-1,500 Employees
- 1,501 - 15,000 Employees
- 15,001 - 50,000 Employees
- 50,001+ Employees

(0% — 10% — 20% — 30%)

% of Respondents by Business Function

- Business Operations
- Customer Service
- Finance
- HR/People Operations
- Other
- Product Delivery
- Sales & Marketing
- Technology

(0% — 20% — 40% — 60%)
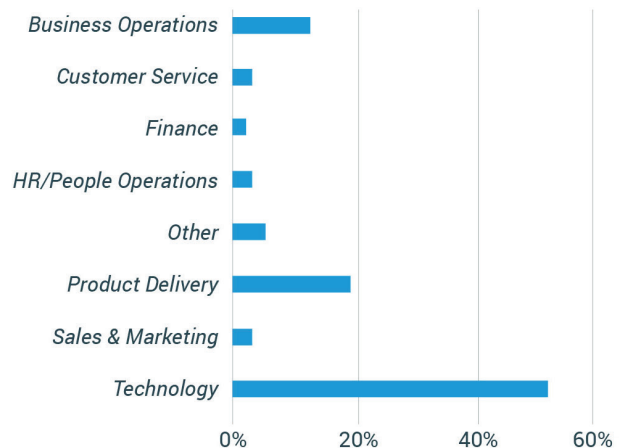
Methodology & Thanks

Acknowledgements

This report is only possible thanks to the gift of time, knowledge, and leadership from the research team.

Our thanks to the report authors, contributors, and reviewers for their active support throughout the research. And thanks to the thousands of respondents who took the time to answer the survey and provide detailed responses to the free text benefits and challenges questions.

All data collected through surveys was anonymized, securely stored, and made accessible only to those on the research team. Names of individuals, companies, and other potential identifiers have been removed or anonymized.

Methodology

This study is a partnership between Scrum Alliance and the Business Agility Institute to answer the question: "Which skills are most in demand in today's workforce?"

Data collection was a combination of a global survey and a physical evidence review of public job descriptions.

- **Survey:** There were two variations of the survey: the first for agile professionals and the second for hiring managers. In both cases, in addition to standard demographic questions, we asked questions related to the skills that organizations were formally seeking, as well as the skills they actually need (if different).

- **Documentation Review:** The second form of data collection was a review of publicly available job descriptions (JDs). Primarily, these were sourced from LinkedIn, but additional JDs were requested from BAI and Scrum Alliance members.

The approach to both the survey and documentation review was designed in line with research good practice to avoid leading participants. However, while institutional bias was limited, it is unavoidable given the context of the survey ("Agile" skills) and the audience taking the survey (Scrum Alliance and BAI networks). This was factored into the analysis of the collected data.

The survey itself was open to anyone. However, given the nature of the questions, a large percentage of respondents were from large (5,000+) Western European and North American companies, mostly in the professional services, technology, or financial services sectors.

Prior to release, the final draft of the report underwent a formal peer review as per the Business Agility Institute peer review process.

Human skills, also known as soft skills, are the personal attributes and social graces that allow people to interact effectively with others.

Skills	Subskill	Description
Attitude Behaviors	Adaptability and Flexibility	Mindset to adjust to change and new situations quickly and effectively.
Attitude Behaviors	Agile Mindset	Willingness to be flexible, collaborative, and open to change in order to achieve the best possible outcome.
Attitude Behaviors	Confidence	Belief in your ability to succeed, even in the face of challenges.
Attitude Behaviors	Curiosity and Learning Mindset	Open to new experiences and knowledge while seeking out opportunities to learn and grow.
Attitude Behaviors	Passion	Intense enthusiasm and drive to achieve a goal or purpose.
Communication	Active Listening	Paying full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, and responding in a way that shows you understand.
Communication	Presentation Skills	Effectively communicate information and ideas to an audience.
Communication	Written and Verbal Communication	Conveying information and ideas through words, either in written or spoken form.
Emotional Intelligence and Empathy	Emotional Intelligence and Empathy	Understand and manage your own emotions, and the emotions of others.
Influence	Conflict Resolution	Identifying, understanding, and resolving conflict in a positive and constructive way.
Influence	Interpersonal Skills	Ability to interact with others effectively and respectfully.
Influence	Motivational	Inspiring and encouraging others to achieve their goals.
Influence	Negotiation	Reaching an agreement between two or more parties through discussion and compromise.
Leadership	Building and Leading Teams	Creating and managing a group of people to achieve a common goal.
Leadership	Managing People	Getting the best out of an individual to achieve a common goal.
Personal Accountability	Ownership and Accountability	Taking responsibility for your actions and outcomes while also being committed to delivering on your promises.
Personal Accountability	Self-Motivation	Drive yourself to achieve your goals, even in the face of challenges.

Appendix A Skills Master List Human Skills

Skills	Subskill	Description
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	Creativity and Innovation	Generating new ideas and solutions, and then implementing them in a way that creates value.
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking	Think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas.
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	Decision-making	Identifying and evaluating options, and then choosing the best course of action.
Teamwork and Collaboration	Teamwork and Collaboration	Working effectively with others to achieve a common goal.
Time Management and Organizational Skills	Organizational Skills	Manage your time, tasks, and resources effectively.
Time Management and Organizational Skills	Time Management	Planning and controlling your time to achieve your goals.

Functional skills are the specific knowledge and abilities needed to perform a particular task or job. They are often technical in nature and can be learned through formal education, training, or on-the-job experience. Functional skills are typically quantifiable and can be measured through tests or certifications.

Skills	Subskill	Description
Agile Acumen	Agile Methods and Frameworks	The modern approaches to work that focuses on delivering value to customers early and often.
Agile Acumen	Agile Techniques and Practices	Specific techniques and methods that teams use to implement agile principles and values in their work.
Agile Acumen	Metrics and Measures	Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to track progress, identify trends, and make informed decisions.
Agile Acumen	Scrum Mastery	Helping teams become more effective at using Scrum and agile practices to deliver value to customers.
Business Acumen	Business Acumen	Understand and apply business principles and concepts to make sound business decisions.
Business Acumen	Business Expertise	Practical experience with key business principles and the ability to apply them to solve real-world problems.
Business Acumen	Systems Thinking	Understand the interconnectedness of complex systems and how they change over time.
Coaching and Facilitation	Coaching	Partnering with individuals and teams to help them achieve their goals by providing support, guidance, and accountability.
Coaching and Facilitation	Facilitation	Guide a group of people to achieve a common goal through effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.
Coaching and Facilitation	Mentorship	Sharing knowledge, experience, and guidance to help others develop and achieve their goals.
Product Design and Analysis	Analytical Skills	Collect, analyze, and interpret information to solve problems and make informed decisions.
Product Design and Analysis	Design	Create products and solutions that meet the needs of users and are both functional and aesthetically pleasing.
Product Leadership	Product Management	Leading a team to build the right product for the right people at the right time.
Product Leadership	Product Ownership	Maximize the value of a product for its users and stakeholders.

Skills	Subskill	Description
Project and Program Management	Portfolio Management	Managing a group of projects and programs to achieve strategic objectives.
Project and Program Management	Project and Program Management	Planning and executing work to achieve specific goals within a set time frame, budget, and scope.
Relationship Management	Client Management	Building and maintaining relationships with clients to ensure their satisfaction and success.
Relationship Management	Stakeholder Management	Identifying, understanding, and managing the needs and expectations of the stakeholders.
Technical Skills	Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning	Design and build computer systems that can learn from data and perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence.
Technical Skills	Cloud Computing	Deliver distributed and online computing services.
Technical Skills	Data	Designing, creating, and maintaining data management systems
Technical Skills	DevOps	Automation and integration between developers and operations teams.
Technical Skills	Software Engineering	Designing, creating, and maintaining software applications.
Tools and Software	Tools and Software	Use a variety of tools and software programs to complete tasks efficiently and effectively.
Transformation	Transformation	Make positive changes to business systems, processes, or people.

Appendix B — Job Titles

These **Job Titles** are specific roles that participating organizations recruit for—within the context of Agile ways of working. They encompass a combination of skills required for success in the responsibilities and duties of the role. The roles below reflect the roles sought after by participating organizations as well as the career paths of individuals.

Please note: The job titles below are referenced in various sections of the report. They are illustrative of the general industry pattern and are not meant to be universal as different organizations often use different definitions.

Job Title	Description
Agile Coach	An Agile Coach is a professional who helps individuals, teams, and organizations improve through the use of Agile practices and methods.
Business Analyst	A Business Analyst (BA) helps organizations improve their business processes and systems by identifying and defining business and product solutions.
DevOps Engineer	A DevOps Engineer is a specialist in the automation and deployment of software applications.
Enterprise Coach	An enterprise coach helps organizations implement and adopt new ways of working at a strategic level to support the organization's goals.
Management	In the context of this report, Management is a broad term to encompass anyone in a people-leadership role separate to the other roles listed here (e.g., PMO Manager, Director of IT, Functional Lead).
Product Manager	A Product Manager is responsible for the strategic alignment and performance of a product.
Product Owner	The product owner owns a product in its entirety; they have the final word on strategic and tactical product decisions.
Program Manager	A Program Manager is responsible for the planning, execution, and completion of a group of related projects (the program) towards a common goal.
Project Manager	A project manager is responsible for the planning, execution, and completion of a project.
RTE	A Release Train Engineer (RTE) facilitates program level processes and execution, drives continuous development, and manages risks and escalates impediments.
Scrum Master	The person on the scrum team who is accountable for implementing the scrum (or other agile) framework, coaching others to understand it better, and enabling the team to continuously improve.
Technologist	In the context of this report, a Technologist is broad term to encompass anyone who specializes in the application of technology to solve problems and improve processes (e.g., software engineer, solution architect, data scientist).
Transformation Lead	A Transformation Lead is responsible for leading, communicating, and managing transformation and change initiatives within an organization.

Appendix B Job Titles

Other Career Paths	Description
Consultant	A Consultant is external to a client organization and provides expert advice and services on agile or business agility related topics.
Retire	
Startup Founder	A Startup Founder is an entrepreneur who starts a new business to bring a new business idea or product to market.
Trainer	An Agile Trainer teaches and instructs others in agile methods and approaches.