

# The Most In-Demand Skills for 2025: Navigating Skills-Based Work in a Dynamic Economy



## Introduction

The labour market is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by rapid advancements in AI and the increasing need for specialized expertise. This shift has led to a move towards skills-based hiring, where proven capabilities are valued over traditional academic credentials.



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## 1 Shift to Skills-Based Hiring and the Rise of Freelancers

A notable 81% of C-suite executives are now adopting skills-based hiring practices, signalling a clear departure from degree-centric recruitment (Upwork, 2024). This focus on practical skills is further emphasized by the fact that 35% of leaders required employees to expand their skillsets within the past year (Upwork, 2024).

Simultaneously, the freelance workforce is becoming increasingly vital. A significant 49% of full-time workers rely on freelancers for crucial skills such as web design, generative AI, and product management (Upwork, 2024). This trend is set to continue, with 48% of CEOs planning to increase freelance hiring, and 76% of executives believing top freelancers provide more value than degree-holding employees (Upwork, 2024).

## 2 The Ascendancy of AI and Machine Learning Skills

AI-related skills are experiencing a surge in demand. Roles such as data annotation, knowledge representation, and generative AI modelling are now highly sought after. Notably, data annotation, essential for training AI models, has seen a remarkable 220% growth, highlighting the critical role of data quality in AI development (Upwork, 2024).

## 3 Growing Demand for Coaching and Development

As the work environment rapidly evolves, career coaching and development have emerged as some of the fastest-growing skills. Human coaching, with its inherent empathy and resilience, is considered irreplaceable, offering support that AI cannot replicate (Upwork, 2024).

## 4 In-Demand Skills and Strategic Positioning

Specialized technical skills, such as generative AI modelling and fractional CFO roles, command premium pay due to their complexity and limited supply (Upwork, 2024). General skills like email marketing and career coaching also demonstrate high demand and growth, providing lucrative opportunities for freelancers (Upwork, 2024). Freelancers are advised to strategically acquire high-demand, high-paying skills, such as machine learning, to position themselves effectively (Upwork, 2024). Businesses, in turn, are encouraged to adopt a skills-based hiring mindset to access specialized expertise and maintain a competitive edge (Upwork, 2024).



## 5 Transformative Trends and Job Market Shifts by 2030

Looking ahead to 2030, the broadening of digital access is projected to be the most transformative trend, alongside advancements in AI, robotics, and energy technologies (World Economic Forum, 2024). These trends will significantly impact job creation and displacement, driving demand for technology-related skills like AI, big data, networks, and cybersecurity (World Economic Forum, 2024).

## 6 Macrotrends Driving Business Transformation

Macrotrends such as broadening digital access, rising cost of living, increased efforts to reduce carbon emissions, and demographic shifts are reshaping the business landscape (World Economic Forum, 2024). These factors are driving significant changes in job roles and required skills.

## 7 Fastest-Growing and Fastest-Declining Jobs

The following lists integrates the fastest-growing jobs with the largest growing jobs, and the fastest declining jobs with the largest declining jobs.

### 7.1 Top Fastest-Growing Jobs:

- Big Data Specialists
- FinTech Engineers
- AI and Machine Learning Specialists
- Software and Applications Developers
- Security Management Specialists
- Data Warehousing Specialists
- Autonomous and Electric Vehicle Specialists
- UI and UX Designers
- Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers
- Internet of Things Specialists
- Data Analysts and Scientists
- Environmental Engineers
- Information Security Analysts
- DevOps Engineer



- Renewable Energy Engineers

## 7.2 Top Fastest-Declining Jobs:

- Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll Clerks
- Administrative Assistants and Executive Secretaries
- Bank Tellers and Related Clerks
- Business Services and Administration Managers
- Cashiers and Ticket Clerks
- Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators
- Client Information and Customer Service Workers
- Data Entry Clerks
- Door-To-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendors, and Related<sup>1</sup> Workers
- Graphic Designers
- Legal Officials
- Legal Secretaries
- Material-Recording and Stock-Keeping Clerks
- Postal Service Clerks
- Printing and Related Trades Workers
- Telemarketers
- Transportation Attendants and Conductors
- Security Guards
- Accountants and Auditors
- Building Caretakers, Cleaners and Housekeepers

## 8 Core Skills for the Future Workforce

Employers are increasingly prioritizing core skills such as analytical thinking, resilience, flexibility, agility, and leadership (World Economic Forum, 2024). These skills, alongside technological literacy, empathy, and continuous learning are essential for navigating the evolving work environment (World Economic Forum, 2024).





## 9 The Impact of Technology and Automation

Technology, particularly broadening digital access and AI is the most significant driver of labour market change (World Economic Forum, 2024). Automation and human-machine collaboration are reshaping work tasks, with automation projected to significantly reduce the proportion of tasks performed solely by humans (World Economic Forum, 2024).

## 10 Economic and Demographic Factors

Economic uncertainty, driven by factors like slower economic growth and rising costs of living, is also influencing job creation and displacement (World Economic Forum, 2024). Demographic shifts, such as growing and aging working-age populations, are further impacting labour market dynamics (World Economic Forum, 2024).

## 11 Call to Action

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What skills are you focusing on for the future? Contact me to share your thoughts, and let's discuss how we can all adapt to this changing landscape!

I can help you tailor strategies to your specific business needs and ensure you have the right people, with the right skillsets, in place to achieve your goals. Contact me today to schedule a consultation.

**HR** On demand HR Support

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