

TECH TALENT REPORT

A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO WHAT TODAY'S
TECH TALENTS EXPECT FROM TOMORROW'S
WORKING LIFE.



SUSTAINABLE
WORKING LIFE



DEMANDS
ON FUTURE
EMPLOYERS

73%

OF TECH TALENTS HIGHLIGHT
NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS AS THE MOST
IMPORTANT FUTURE COMPETENCIES.

UNDERSTANDING TECH TALENTS IS KEY TO SUCCESS

The work-life is changing at an increasingly rapid pace. In addition to the leap taken during the pandemic, digitalisation, automation and AI are some of the factors driving the trend towards remote working, virtual teams, innovation hubs, lifelong learning and much more. Moreover, the generation now on the threshold of the labour market has never experienced a world without the internet. They are conscious, value-driven and have a clear message for the employers of the future: keep up with technology, contribute to a better world and offer a sustainable working life.

As one of the leading companies in Sweden within tech and digitalisation, we want to help spread knowledge about today's tech talents and their expectations of future employers. Some of the report's main insights are that tech talents stand out significantly compared to other young graduates. They have considerably higher demands for continuous development – and as many as 73% highlight soft skills such as creativity, drive, leadership and social skills as the most important future competencies. Tech talents also demand a better work-life balance. They do not want to work less, but they want to be able to influence when and where they work.

The report also shows that there is a conflict between the companies' focus on profitability and growth versus the talents' expectations of continuous learning and development. This presents a challenge for companies to ensure that profitability and growth go hand in hand with the talents' demands for development, life balance and sustainability.

This report is the second in the series on tech talents. The first was launched in 2021 and presented ten key insights on what tech talents value in a workplace. This year we're taking it a step further and, together with Kairos Future, we're exploring what they're looking for as they gaze into the future. Welcome to take part of the world of future tech talents, concluded by surveys, in-depth interviews and wise words from experts and visionaries!

Happy reading!

Pernilla Johansson
CEO, Nexer Tech Talent

Elin Ogéus
Marketing Director, Nexer Tech Talent





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A NEW REALITY

The tech industry is evolving at a rapid pace and there is a growing need to take advantage of the opportunities of digitalisation. At the same time, skills shortages continue to be a major challenge for businesses. One way to adapt to the new reality is to start recruiting according to ability, and not just according to a CV, says **Hélène Barnekow**, Partner at Ascension AS and former CEO of Microsoft Sweden.



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THE DNA OF TECH TALENTS

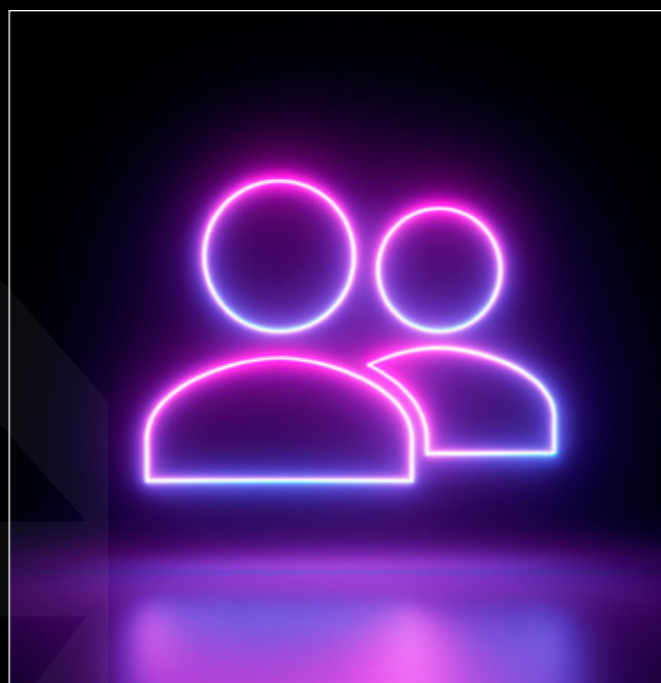
Tech talents are not like everyone else. Compared to other young graduates, they stand out in terms of demands for constant development, work-life balance and the possibility to work remotely. You could say that the new generation is forcing us to change, and we should be incredibly grateful for that, says **Cissi Elwin**, CEO of Chefakademin.



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THE ART OF RETAINING A TECH TALENT

To retain tech talents, companies should invest in skills development and support them in their personal development. But there is no one size fits all - according to **Stefan Tengblad**, Professor of Human Resource Management at Göteborgs universitet, companies need to adapt to individuals rather than the other way round. Participation in a talent programme can be an effective way to both recruit and retain talents, which is confirmed by **Sherlot Jonsson**, HR strategist at Försvarets Materielverk.



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THE FUTURE OF WORKING LIFE

For companies to be successful in 2030, they need to keep up with technological developments, actively contribute to a better world, and make sure they offer a sustainable working life. At least if the tech talents have their way. This is something **Ylva Schéle**, Head of Human Resources and Organization Development at Volvo Group Digital & IT, agrees with. **Marie Hallander Larsson**, HR Director at Akademiska Hus, believes that business intelligence should be part of every employee's job.

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DEMANDS ON FUTURE EMPLOYERS

The report shows that, from the perspective of tech talents, there are three key issues that employers of the future need to understand and act on. **Henrik Green**, an independent consultant with extensive experience as a business leader, gives his views on the challenges facing employers and what is required to lead sustainable organisations into the opportunities of the future.



WE ARE FACING A NEW REALITY

A WHOLE WORLD IS CHANGING – AGAIN

The pace of change in the tech industry is accelerating. The question is whether more has happened in such a short time in any other industry – ever. No sooner had the pandemic subsided than inflation and rising interest rates struck, reducing risk appetite and leading to the largest ever wave of layoffs at several of the global tech giants. Shortly afterwards, the AI application ChatGPT was launched, fundamentally changing knowledge work, programming and information management. An entire world is now adjusting to a new reality – again.

NO TRANSITION WITHOUT TECH TALENTS

There is a growing need to seize the opportunities of digitalisation and fully exploit the potential of AI. At the same time, there is a shortage of the required skills. The skills shortage is described as a ticking time bomb¹, and it is particularly acute in the tech industry – 70 000 IT specialists are estimated to be missing by 2024², unless strong action is taken. To successfully meet the innovation needs of the future, we need tech talents. Without them, there will be no transition.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TARGET GROUP IS KEY

Attracting tech talents and retaining them over time has become one of the biggest challenges for many employers today. Success requires a deep understanding of the target group: who they are at heart, what drives them and what they expect from the future of work. Understanding the tech talents of this generation – those who understand the anatomy of future societal structures and to some extent are the future themselves – is crucial to future-proofing your skills needs.

¹ https://www.svensktnaringsliv.se/regioner/vastra-gotaland/kompetensbristen-en-tickande-bomb_1175729.html

² <https://www.techsverige.se/2021/07/70-000-personer-saknas-inom-techbranschen-2024/>



HÉLÈNE BARNEKOW
PARTNER AT ASCENSION AS

LEADERS MUST ALSO BE DOOR OPENERS

Hélène Barnekow has a solid background in the IT industry. She most recently worked as CEO of Microsoft Sweden and is currently a Partner at Ascension AS. Here she gives her views on how the tech industry needs to change its mindset in order to maximise the potential of tech talents.

The skills shortage in IT/tech is urgent, with many companies competing for the same skills. So what can you do to secure your skills needs?

- I believe that we as employers need to change our way of thinking and start relying on ability instead of just formalities and CVs. There are many tech jobs that can be done without being a civil engineer from Chalmers or KTH. You may have learnt to code yourself or you may come from the gaming industry and have learnt to code there. But for these people to find the courage to apply, we must show that they are welcome. We need to lower the barriers and make ourselves accessible to more people.

To harness the innovative power of tech talents, Hélène believes it is important to open the doors to them directly.

- Give them access to the networks, let them take the lead and run their own initiatives. It should not take three years to work your way into a company. The tech industry is still quite organised in silos, but today we know that innovation is driven by creativity, cross-functional collaboration and diversity. So we can't be stuck in old structures that were created to deliver exactly to the minute.

This also means that leadership has to change, according to Hélène.

- As a leader, if you only drive towards KPIs, your biggest task will be to keep track of things. KPIs and growth are all about outcome, but talents are more interested in development, innovation and doing the right things in the right way. Therefore, it should be at least as important that you as a leader are measured



“
IT SHOULD NOT TAKE
THREE YEARS TO
WORK YOUR WAY
INTO A COMPANY.”

on whether you have opened doors, created new networks or hired talents from new places, which contributes to real diversity. I also think companies in general need to get better at tying the narrative together – what is our purpose? How do we get there? What is your role in this? This gives employees an understanding of why you do or don't do something. It becomes a compass that creates direction and motivation.

Despite the rapid pace of technological development, it is not necessarily the technical skills that need to be replenished to keep up. At least not for today's tech talents, says Hélène.

- They don't think things are moving too fast – we do. They grew up with digital technology, they have their networks and are constantly updated via social media. If there is a new cool innovation, they know exactly where to go to immerse themselves into it. And they do it because it's in their interest, not because they have to. So I think companies need to look at what skills development they offer. It may not be primarily about AI, machine learning or Java, but instead about work-life balance, mental health or cognitive and social competencies, Hélène concludes.



TECH TALENTS WANT TO DEVELOP CONSTANTLY

To understand the future vision of tech talents, we first need to understand who they are at their core. Specifically, they are either at the beginning of their professional career, with a technical university degree, or at the end of their university studies. But what really defines them is something else: a passion for development and a strong desire for work-life balance.

Like most people, tech talents think that nice colleagues, a good leader and secure employment conditions are important. But what they prioritise most is an innovative culture and opportunities to grow. All the time. And this is where they really stand out compared to other young graduates. Tech talents are, simply put, extremely development-orientated.

BELIEVES THAT CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS ONE OF THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF WORKING LIFE.

23%

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, 20-35 YEARS OLD

47%

TECH TALENTS, 20-35 YEARS OLD

CONSIDERS WORK-LIFE BALANCE TO BE ONE OF THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF WORKING LIFE.

42%

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, 20-35 YEARS OLD

55%

TECH TALENTS, 20-35 YEARS OLD

WORK-LIFE BALANCE
-TECH TALENTS ZEN



The second area where tech talents stand out from other young graduates is their work-life balance requirements. Just because they have sky-high development ambitions doesn't mean they want to move into the office. Or give up life for work. They also have higher expectations of being able to work remotely. Late nights and weekend work in the office is part of the past.



TECH TALENT

JUNIORS BRING NEW PERSPECTIVES

An interest in electronics and software brought **Raashita Gullipalli** from India to Sweden as an exchange student. After a master's degree in Software Engineering and a completed talent programme, she now works as a software developer in embedded systems at Volvo Cars.

Working with hardware at Volvo Cars requires knowledge of the basics of electronics and software, but it also requires building knowledge through continuous skills development and networking.

- It is important to have a network of professional relationships that can act as mentors and help you move forward. I used to be quite introverted, but I have learnt to take risks and leave my comfort zone. Continuous development is very important to me, partly because IT is constantly changing and evolving, but also because I personally like variety and breaking routines.

Flexibility at work is something that Raashita values highly, which is why she thinks remote working is good.

- You save travelling time and don't have to spend as much time getting ready. Instead, you can work efficiently and at your own pace. Of course, if your team works remotely a lot, it's important to organise team-building activities, joint lunches and events to really get to know each other. This makes it easier to reach out to people and ask for help.

Raashita believes that the biggest challenge for today's tech companies is keeping up with new trends and customer needs. To close the gap, her tip is to hire more UX designers and graduate developers.



RAASHITA GULLIPALLI
SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, VOLVO CARS

- The market is more competitive than you think. To be at the leading edge, we need more people working on UX and receiving feedback from customers. I also think it's important to bring in more junior developers. They need to learn from the seniors, but they also contribute with new and fresh perspectives.

When asked what is most important for Raashita to stay in a workplace, there are several answers.

- The most important thing for me is to have a good work-life balance. But also to have the opportunity to develop my technical interests and not be forced to work on only one particular task. A good culture and work environment with a supportive manager is also important, as is feeling respected and appreciated by the team. And being well compensated for my work, Raashita concludes.



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR ME IS TO HAVE A GOOD BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND PRIVATE LIFE.

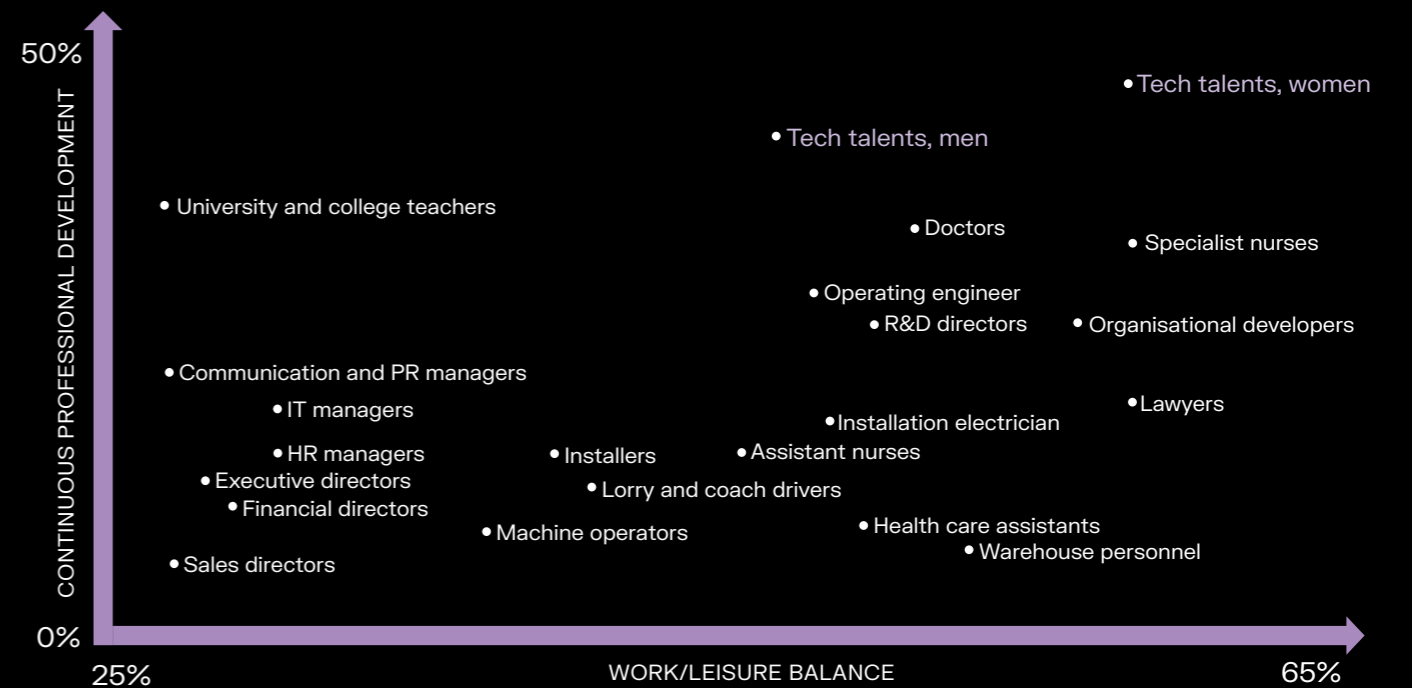




FEMALE TECH TALENTS FAR FROM THE NORM

In fact, compared to other professions, tech talents are in an extreme position when it comes to demands for continuous skills development and work-life balance. And the most extreme position is held by female tech talents.

The figure below shows the proportion of different occupational groups that rate continuous skills development and work-life balance as one of the 10 most important aspects of working life (out of 30 choices).





IT IS NOT ABOUT HOW MUCH - BUT ABOUT WHO, WHAT AND HOW

The issue of remote working is complex. For example, there is no clear relationship between the amount of telework and job satisfaction or the propensity to remain in the workplace. In other words, it is not the case that those who work remotely a lot are more satisfied with their jobs or more likely to stay in their jobs. How tech talents perceive remote work is highly individual, and therefore a successful strategy must be based on customisation and a high degree of flexibility. At least if the aim is to have satisfied tech talents. According to McKinsey³, it is also a question of which tasks require physical presence and which tasks are best or equally well done remotely. For example, a brainstorming session can be done on-site in the actual ideation process, and then documented, refined and reconciled remotely. In short, it is a question of who, what and how, rather than how much.

REMOTE IS KEY

Being able to work remotely is more than twice as important for tech talents compared to other young graduates. This may be because teleworking makes it easier to achieve the important work-life balance. As with tech talents in the US³, it is also the slightly older tech talents in Sweden who think it is most important to be able to work from home. Perhaps family formation has something to do with it; the juggling act of picking up and dropping off at pre-school is undoubtedly made easier by remote working.

VIEWS THE POSSIBILITY OF WORKING
REMOTELY AS ONE OF THE 10 MOST
IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF WORKING LIFE

17%

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, 20-35 YEARS OLD

39%

TECH TALENTS, 20-35 YEARS OLD

³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/what-us-tech-talent-expects-from-remote-work>

CISSI ELWIN
CEO, CHEFAKADEMIN

THE NEW GENERATION FORCES US TO CHANGE

Today's young people want to contribute to a better world and are therefore demanding that companies are sustainable and jobs are meaningful. In this way, you could say that they are forcing us to change, and we should be incredibly grateful for that, says **Cissi Elwin**, CEO at Chefakademin.

The new requirements mean that companies can't just think in terms of revenue and profit margins – they must also consider issues such as sustainability, equality and diversity. And it's important to do your homework properly.

- I think that both young and experienced talents feel quite quickly if it is just talk from the management. You have to back up what you say so that the company is permeated by these values.

While it is a fact that diversity increases profitability, and that sustainable organisations are better able to attract and retain talents, changes in these areas are often made with a knife to the throat.

- You understand all this on a theoretical level, but when you put it on your agenda, there are always a thousand things already on the list. For example, we talked about new ways of working and leading for many years, but it

never materialised until the pandemic forced us to. Only then did we realise how absurd it was that people were sitting in traffic for two hours to get to the office when it wasn't necessary.

Cissi thinks that working remotely has many positive effects, but one advantage of being in the office is that it also leads to skills development.

- When you're young, you need to see how others are doing things and working, and that can be difficult if you work too much remotely. I think we need to value and systematise everyday learning, because we are constantly learning new things by interacting with our colleagues in our daily work.

Working remotely also places greater demands on leaders to create context and meaning.



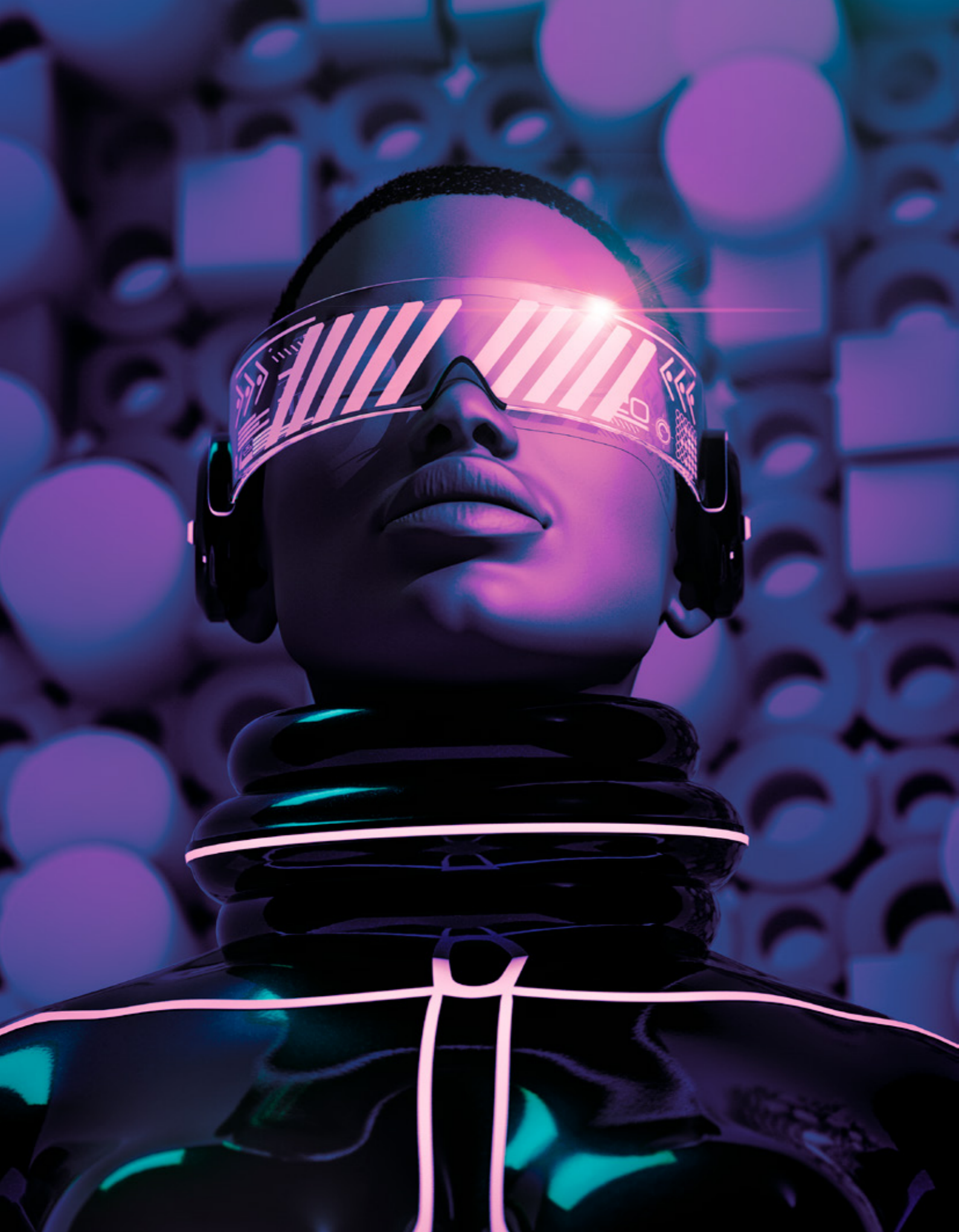
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WE NEED TO VALUE
AND SYSTEMATISE
THE LEARNING IN
EVERYDAY LIFE.

- It is not enough to have performance reviews once or twice a year. You must have a close and ongoing dialogue where you as a manager listen as much as you talk. It is very important to be clear about goals and expectations – if you don't get continuous feedback, you can either give up or work way too much, which in turn leads to stress or sitting for hours interpreting what a manager really meant. If you can remove that uncertainty and create a sense of security and calm, you have come a long way.

Cissi also debunks the myth that young people are adrenaline junkies who are always on the lookout for new adventures.

- There has perhaps been a perception that young people don't care much about the sense of security. But this is not my experience – the young people I meet need a lot of security, confirmation and to feel that someone has their back, concludes Cissi.



THE ART OF RETAINING A TECH TALENT

Attracting young talents is one thing, retaining them is another. And retaining talents is much more important for most people, especially when they have invested time and money in them over the past year or two. In this year's survey, more than half (54%) say they plan to change jobs within the next year. Tech talents are volatile, to say the least.

LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ARE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

So how do you keep a tech talents happy and encourage them to stay? The short answer is learning and skills development. This is because the likelihood of retaining them increases significantly if employers can provide a culture and processes that support continuous and systematic learning. This becomes clear when we divide tech talents into two groups – those who have room for continuous learning in their workplace versus those who do not.

PLANS TO CHANGE JOBS IN THE NEXT YEAR

45%

HAVE ROOM FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING

72%

DO NOT HAVE ROOM FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING

STEFAN TENGBLAD

PROFESSOR OF HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT AT GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

COMPANIES MUST ADAPT TO INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN THE OTHER WAY ROUND

Stefan Tengblad, Professor of Human Resource Management at Göteborgs universitet, says the biggest change for HR departments in the future will be personalisation, which in turn will make HR work more complex.

There is no one size fits all, according to Stefan Tengblad. If employees are to thrive and fulfil their potential, their individual needs must be met.

- HR needs to shift focus from the collective to individual employees. Instead of having employees adapt to the company's structures, you can look at the company as a platform for them. Then ask yourself, "What makes this particular individual want to be on our platform?" It can be difficult, but I think it's important to have that mindset. Otherwise you will lock in people who neither thrive nor perform well.

For an organisation to get the full value of a talent, it is important to find tasks that motivate and create development opportunities.

- You often want to throw talented people into operational projects where they have to deliver at all times, but the risk is that they don't get the development they need. They also need time to familiarise themselves

with new things, take courses, travel abroad, and so on.

To make room for this, Stefan believes that companies should sometimes turn down more assignments. There may also be a need for more and completely different competencies that can relieve the critical resources, as even in tech-heavy projects there are many tasks that do not require tech competence.

- An engineering degree contains a lot of maths, models, calculations and so on. But when they enter the labour market, they usually don't have to use much of it. Instead, it's about planning, coordination and project management. So maybe you don't need ten civil engineers in a project, maybe five is enough? Then you have completely different competencies that complement them.

So matching different profiles in a team can be better than having several people who are experts in the same thing. Stefan therefore believes that many organisations



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YOU OFTEN WANT TO THROW TALENTED PEOPLE INTO OPERATIONAL PROJECTS WHERE THEY HAVE TO DELIVER AT ALL TIMES, BUT THE RISK IS THAT THEY DON'T GET THE DEVELOPMENT THEY NEED.

are too cautious in their recruitment and only look for people who are similar to those they already have.

- CVs and formalities are often used as a sorting mechanism, narrowing down the selection. They may also exclude people with a foreign background because they are not familiar with the education they received in their home country. Those with a strong employer brand may be able to afford to be more selective, but even they miss out on a lot of talent.

According to Stefan, we therefore need to broaden the concept of talent to include more than ability. Just as in the AMO model – Abilities, Motivation, Opportunities – the right abilities are only one of three important pieces of the puzzle.

- We need to work on maintaining motivation and creating opportunities. The talents must feel appreciated, be able to develop and have the conditions to flourish, Stefan concludes.

SATISFIED AND PLANNING
TO STAY

18%

No talent programme
or space for
continuous learning.

47%

No talent programme,
but space for
continuous learning.

78%

Talent programme
and space for
continuous learning.

TALENT PROGRAMMES INCREASE THE CHANCES OF THEM STAYING ON

Next to continuous learning, participation in a talent programme is the parameter most strongly associated with satisfied tech talents who want to stay at their workplace.

Only 18% of those who did not start their career in a talent programme and do not feel that they receive continuous skills development are satisfied and plan to stay, while the figure increases to 47% if there is a lot of room for continuous learning.

The best combination is having been introduced to the world of work through a talent programme and being in a workplace that offers plenty of room for continuous learning. Here, the proportion who are satisfied and plan to stay is more than four times higher (78%).

We don't know exactly what the reasons for the large differences are, but based on the results of the survey, it is reasonable to believe that the learning offered by the talent programmes meets the very high professional development requirements of tech talents. The training elements in the talent programme provide tech talents with the type of learning that they themselves demand and perceive as crucial future competencies.

We also know from last year's survey that security and well-being are strong driving forces among tech talents, while the fear of not being enough is strong. Getting on track with development, learning and practice in a safe environment at an early stage in their working life creates security – something they themselves emphasise as the basic prerequisite for achieving great things.



SOFT VALUES ARE HARD VALUES

To manage growth and increase delivery capacity, both leadership and employees need to be developed. This is the opinion of **Sherlot Jonsson**, HR strategist and responsible for strategic competence supply at Försvarets Materielverk.



SHERLOT JONSSON
HR STRATEGIST AND RESPONSIBLE FOR
STRATEGIC COMPETENCE MANAGEMENT AT
FÖRSVARETS MATERIELVERK

The deteriorating security situation in the world has led to a historic investment in Swedish defence, which places greater demands on Försvarets Materielverk (FMV). The agency runs around 700 development projects, and the orders from the Swedish Armed Forces include two new submarines, a series of warships, air defence systems, improvements to the Gripen fighter aircraft and much more.

- Since FMV will grow and increase production, we have added a development programme for developing employeeeeship. Since we have already made an investment in developing leadership. Among other things, the development programme aims to strengthen responsibility, cooperation and commitment. These are usually called soft values, but they are really hard values because it is about increasing our ability to deliver, says Sherlot.

IT security has long been a skill shortage for FMV. To find new ways to solve the shortage, a tailor-made talent programme for IT security was implemented together with Nexer Tech Talent.

- By bringing in junior engineers and training them with specific knowledge for our business, we have both strengthened and rejuvenated our workforce. All talents have chosen to stay on, so for us it was a 100 per cent payoff.

At the end of the programme, all candidates were employed by FMV, which means that the agency

has strengthened its operations with 12 young engineers and systems scientists. To develop and retain talent in IT security, FMV developed a fast track for skills and salary development.

- As a government agency, it is difficult for us to compete within the industry in terms of salaries. However, we can offer incredibly interesting and meaningful work and the opportunity to get certified in a specialised area of IT security. One day a month, former programme participants can study during working hours and after three to five years, FMV pays for the certification exam.

In addition to retaining existing staff, FMV also needs to recruit nearly 700 new staff by 2026, many of them engineers with various specialised skills.

The IT security talent programme was a pilot project for FMV, but because it was so successful, this model will be continued to attract scarce skills.

- Next on the agenda is a talent programme in ILS (Integrated Logistics Support) and another in IT security, Sherlot concludes.



WE HAVE STRENGTHENED
AND REJUVENATED THE
WORKFORCE THROUGH
TALENT PROGRAMMES.

SUSTAINABLE CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- A CHALLENGE TOWARDS 2030

How do tech talents see the future of working life? What challenges do they see employers facing, from their perspective as young employees at the cutting edge of technology? The answers from the survey can be summarised in three challenges, or perhaps three pieces of advice, from tech talents to today's business leaders. These are the challenges that tech talents see as crucial for companies to address if they want to be successful by 2030.

REDUCED CLIMATE IMPACT AND INCREASED GENDER EQUALITY

The first challenge is about sustainability and the responsibility of employers to create a better world. Two perspectives dominate – reducing climate impact and increasing gender equality.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE CUTTING EDGE

The second challenge is the ability to keep up with, and recognise the opportunities of, rapid technological change. According to the tech talents, it is crucial for companies to be ready and quickly adopt new technologies in order not to be left behind, and it is not without concern that some of them describe the situation for employers and society at large.

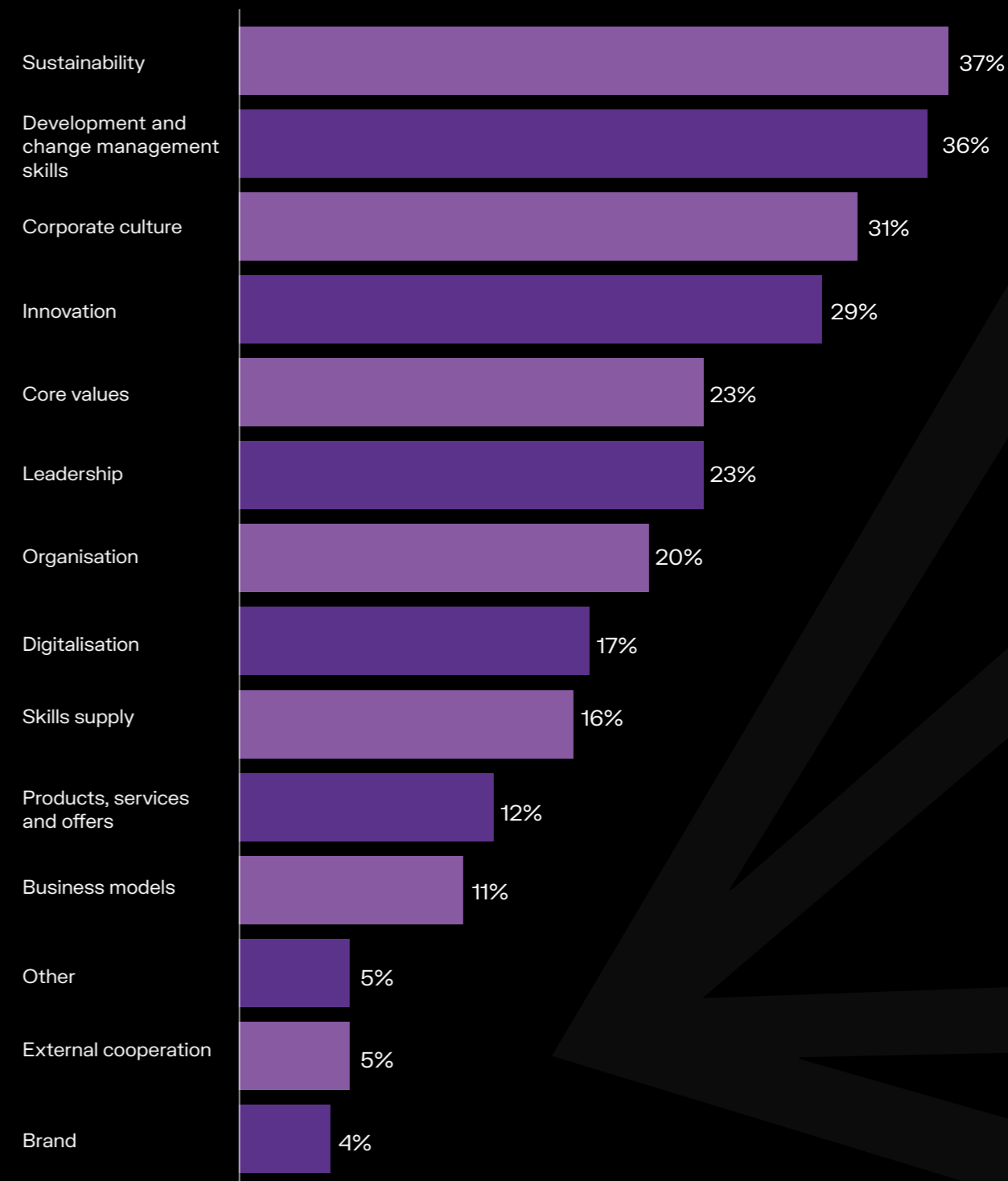
A SUSTAINABLE WORKING LIFE

The third challenge is also about sustainability, but about sustainable working life, and creating a workplace culture that promotes employee well-being. Keeping up with technological developments and contributing to them must not be at the expense of employees – on the contrary, employee well-being is seen as a direct prerequisite for innovation.

CONCLUSION: THE ART OF SLACKLINING

For companies, this all adds up to the challenge of walking a slackline between keeping up with developments and doing so in a way that can attract and retain talented people with high standards in the work environment.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR COMPANIES/EMPLOYERS IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN 2030?



TECH TALENT

YOU CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BUSINESS AND IT

IT companies need to give more room for technically skilled people to be involved in decision-making and business development. Those who realise that you cannot separate business and IT are the ones who will succeed best in the future, says **Markus Elfving**, technical product owner at SEB.

After Markus graduated with an engineering degree from Uppsala University and worked for a year, he participated in a 12-month talent programme at SEB. The positive culture at SEB was something that Markus valued highly and was a contributing factor to him choosing to stay on after the programme ended. In addition to a positive and safe culture, Markus is motivated by the opportunities to contribute to something bigger, to grow, develop and take on new roles. And according to Markus, this responsibility lies both with him and his employer.

- It goes both ways. I need to think about what my next step is, what I want to do next, what I enjoy and want to change or improve. Then I think employers have a responsibility to help. If they are interested in getting individuals to thrive and stay, they need to be sensitive to individual wishes.

One thing that Markus sees as a challenge for today's IT companies is the ability to be more competence and technology-driven.

- Companies need to listen more to people who actually work with IT when it comes to decisions and change journeys. You can't let the developers sit on the sidelines while leaving the decision-making solely to the



MARKUS ELFVING
Technical product owner, SEB

business side. They don't always know what it's all about, what this or that decision actually results in.

According to Markus, two other challenges for 2030 are IT security and cloudification.

- IT security is becoming increasingly important and is something that will require a lot of expertise and investment in the future. Something that goes hand in hand with this is cloudification, i.e. moving from being self-hosted to the cloud. It is a major change project where you need to keep security in mind, which means that a lot of IT expertise is also needed in decision-making, concludes Markus.



COMPANIES NEED TO BE MORE SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN.



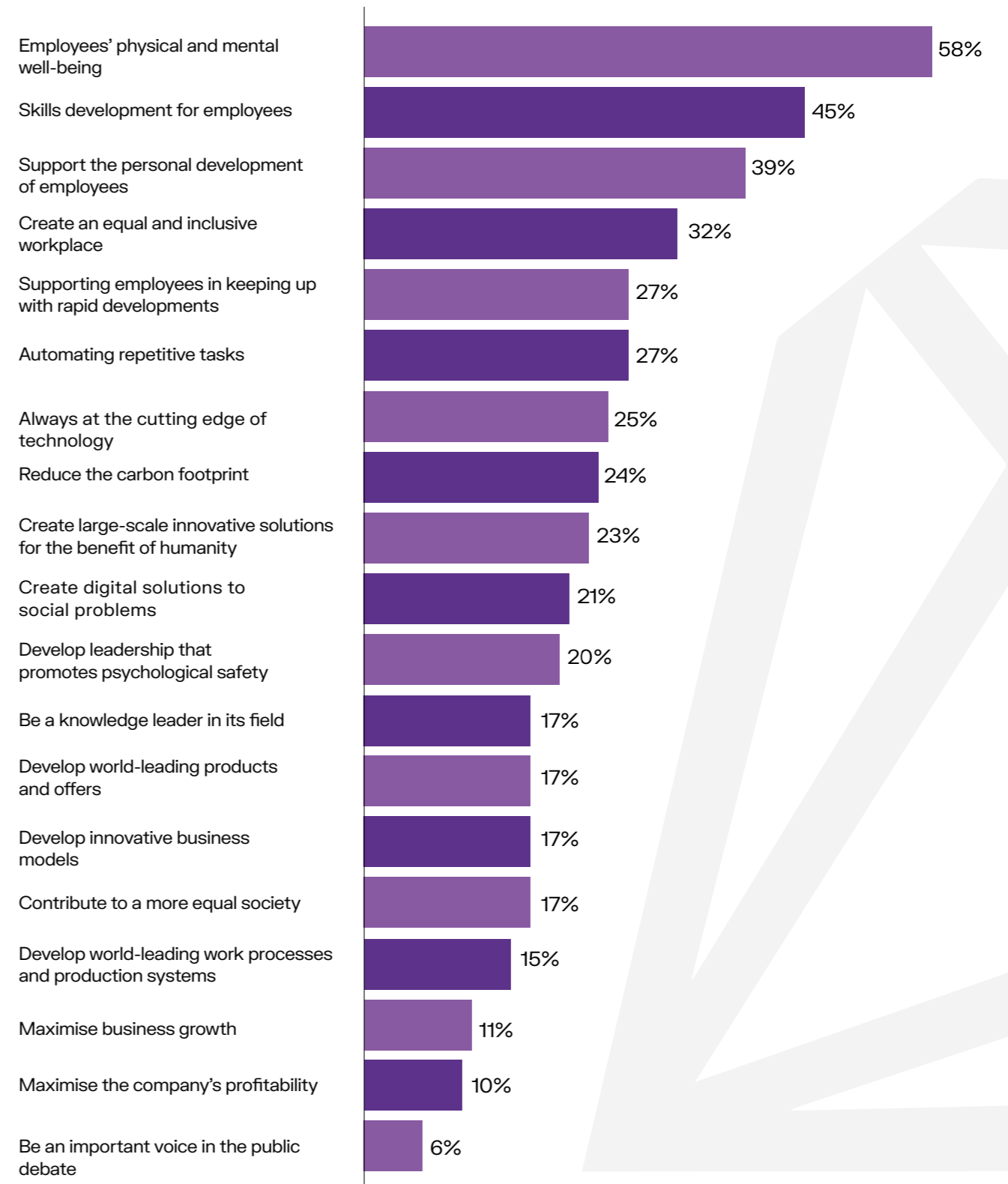


EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AS A DEVELOPMENT ENGINE

So where should companies' development work be directed, if the tech talents are allowed to decide? Well, not in the same direction as today, towards growth and profitability. Instead, the path to success for a tech talent is through the development of the company's main resource – its employees.

The responses clearly show that tech talents believe that companies should primarily focus on making employees feel good, physically and mentally, making sure they develop their skills and supporting them in their personal development. These are the three most prioritised areas by tech talents. At the bottom of the list is what they currently consider to be at the top of the corporate agenda, namely growth and profitability.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE, WHAT WOULD BE THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR WORKPLACE'S DEVELOPMENT FOCUS?

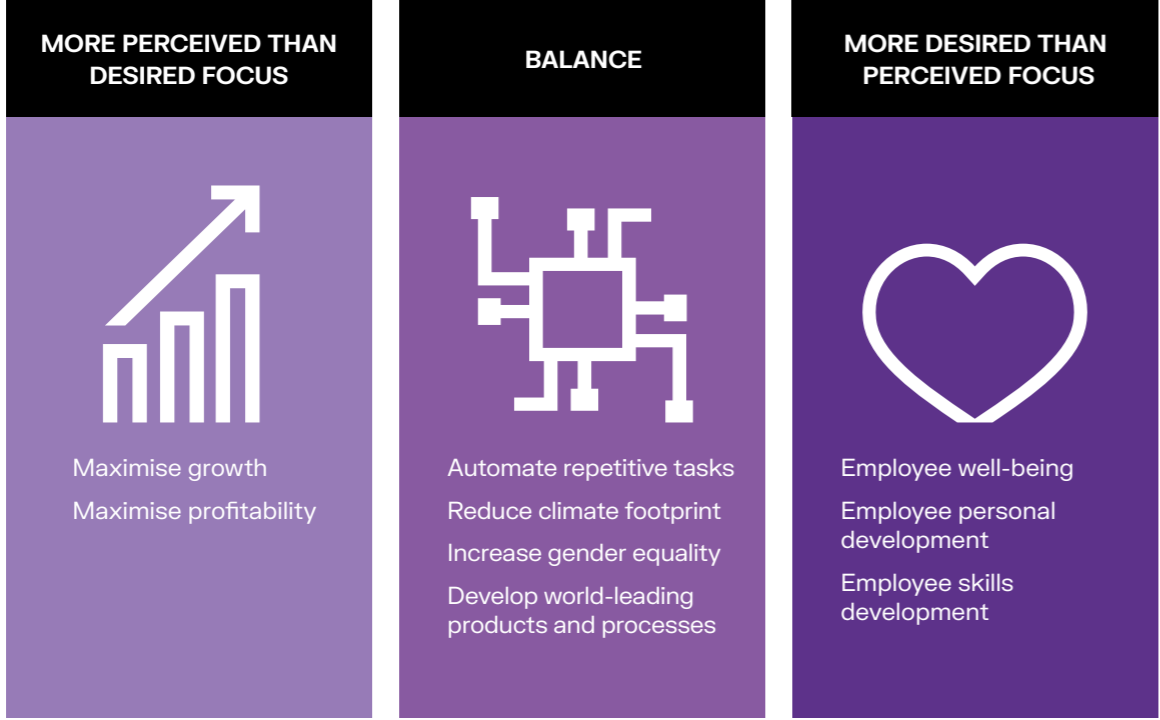


CONFLICT

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT VS. ECONOMIC SUCCESS OF THE COMPANY

The challenge is to show that these variables are not always in conflict with each other, and that growth and profitability can even be a prerequisite for employee development. Because at the moment there is a conflict.

When we compare the ideal with the reality that tech talents actually experience, the difference between the desired and perceived development focus becomes apparent. Around 10% of tech talents want growth and profitability to be the main development focus of the company. But more than 40% feel that this is the case. At the other end of the spectrum, around 50% of tech talents want employee well-being and skills development to be the main focus of development, while less than 30% feel that this is the case.



Differences and similarities between tech talents' perceived and desired development focus.

UNITY

SUSTAINABILITY, EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION

The fact that there is a perceived conflict between the economic development of employees and companies does not mean that there is no consensus on other issues. On the contrary, when it comes to the core mission of the organisation, the values that employees and companies strive to achieve and create, there is great agreement. Assuming the role of technological pioneer, developing groundbreaking products and offerings, and contributing to a more sustainable and equal society are examples of areas where ideals and perceived reality go hand in hand.

THE WAY FORWARD

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT LEADS TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps tech talents and companies have a common understanding of their goals, but disagree on how to achieve them. This makes it important for companies to focus on common ground - technology, breakthrough innovation and sustainability – while demonstrating that profitability and employee development can go hand in hand.

For companies, profitability and growth naturally take centre stage. It is growth and profitability that creates shareholder value, which is rewarded on the stock market, and also what leaders are rewarded for. But just as the tech talents noted, a short-term focus on the first and last line risks missing the talents' expectation of learning and development. And development is what talents care about most and what determines whether they stay or leave. If they leave too easily, there is a risk of extensive consequences for both the first and last line. Not least in the long term.

In order to combine the tech talents' desire for continuous skills development with more short-term business objectives, it is important to try to balance what is important for the company in the short term with what is more long-term and enjoyable for the individual – which in turn is also important for the company in the long term.

MARIE HALLANDER LARSSON
HR DIRECTOR, AKADEMISKA HUS

LET YOUR EMPLOYEES MANAGE THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Akademiska Hus is one of Sweden's largest property companies that builds, develops and manages environments for education, research and innovation. To maintain its leading position in a changing and increasingly digitalised world, **Marie Hallander Larsson**, HR Director, believes that curiosity is a crucial factor.

Working with HR issues at a state-owned property company may not sound like a tech-intensive job. But Marie Hallander Larsson believes that everyone needs to improve their technical skills, regardless of their role and what they do.

- Tech is everywhere these days and the pace of development is incredibly fast. Even if you don't work as a tech specialist, you need to be able to use everyday technology in the form of chats, bots and various tools for digital meetings and analyses.

To create a culture where there is a drive to keep up to date and keep up with developments, Akademiska Hus has a curiosity strategy.

- There is a saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. It's really the same with skills development. We can send people on as many courses as we like, but if they are not curious and want to learn, it won't matter. Therefore, as a company, we must

constantly create conditions for people to be curious about the world around them.

According to Marie, it is therefore important that business intelligence is part of every employee's job and not a separate department within the strategy unit.

- For example, we in HR try to link HR trends with property trends. We should train and recruit for the future, not for the present. I have also introduced something called HR-Learning, where my employees take turns sharing something they find interesting in their area or within Akademiska Hus. Then we discuss and reflect on this together.

The traditional performance review is also something that Akademiska Hus has left behind. Instead, there are ongoing assignment dialogues that are needs-based, both on an individual and external level.

- The more flexible the work becomes, the more



“

WE SHOULD TRAIN AND RECRUIT FOR THE FUTURE, NOT FOR THE PRESENT.

important it is for both employees and managers that we have regular reviews and that we are clear about our expectations of each other. "What is your mission and what conditions do you have to succeed with it?" Then I as a manager don't need to check that you are in the office or how you solve the task. It's not in three-year plans that we develop, it's in everyday life.

However, according to Marie, this does not mean any real changes for the leadership of the future, but the changes are more about how we execute the more formal leadership, i.e. control and management.

- People have always wanted visible, responsive and clear leadership. This has not changed, but new arenas and new tools have made these basic pillars even more important. If you as a leader have invested in your relationships, created trust and security in what is expected, you have all the conditions to create good work results and a good working climate.

Marie's curiosity strategy and approach to business intelligence has been proven to work.

- As a state-owned property company, we have a bit of an uphill struggle; people think we're boring. But we are a very cool company! When we follow up on our recruitments, we often hear that it is precisely the curiosity and the desire to develop that made them choose us, concludes Marie.

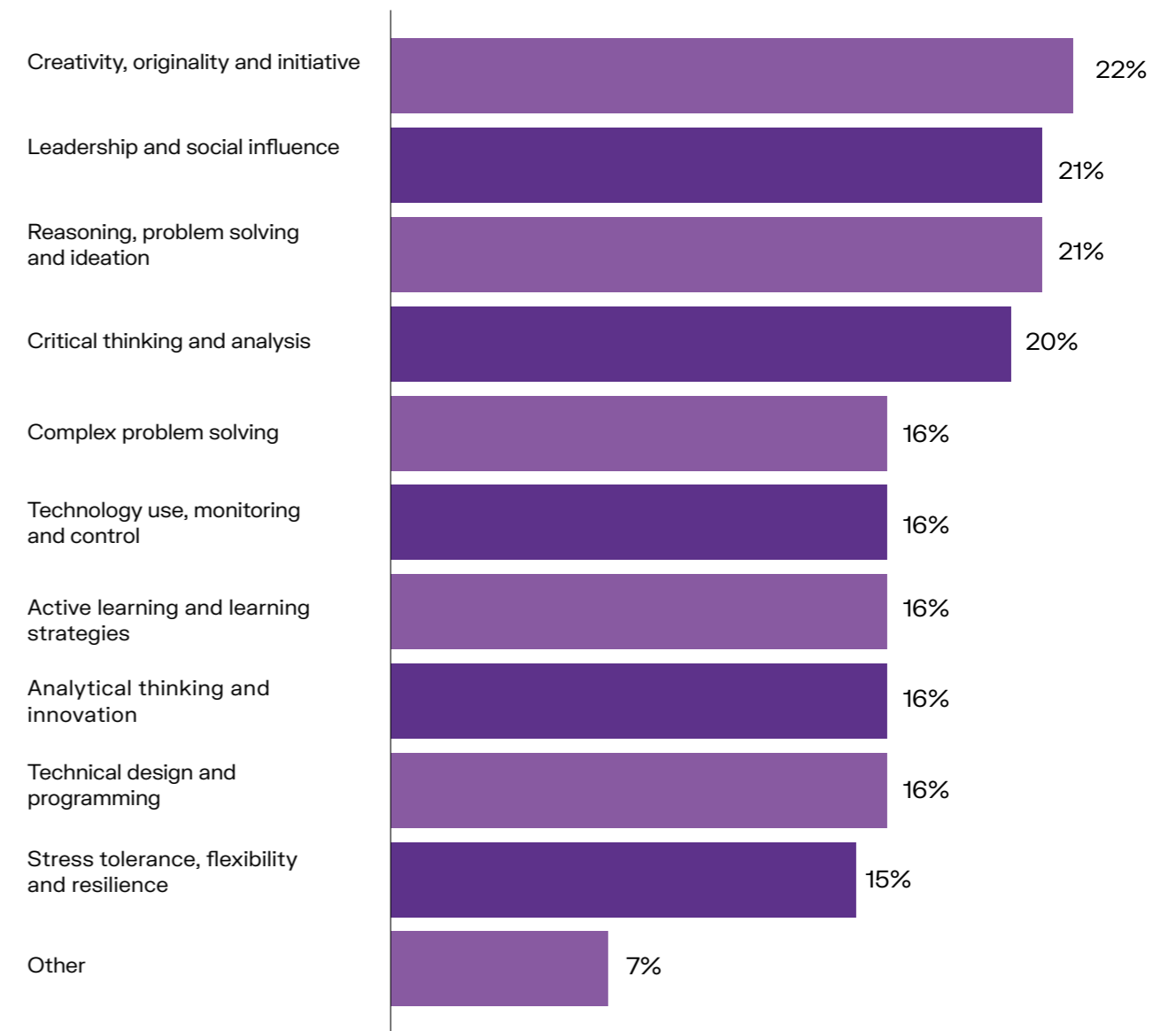


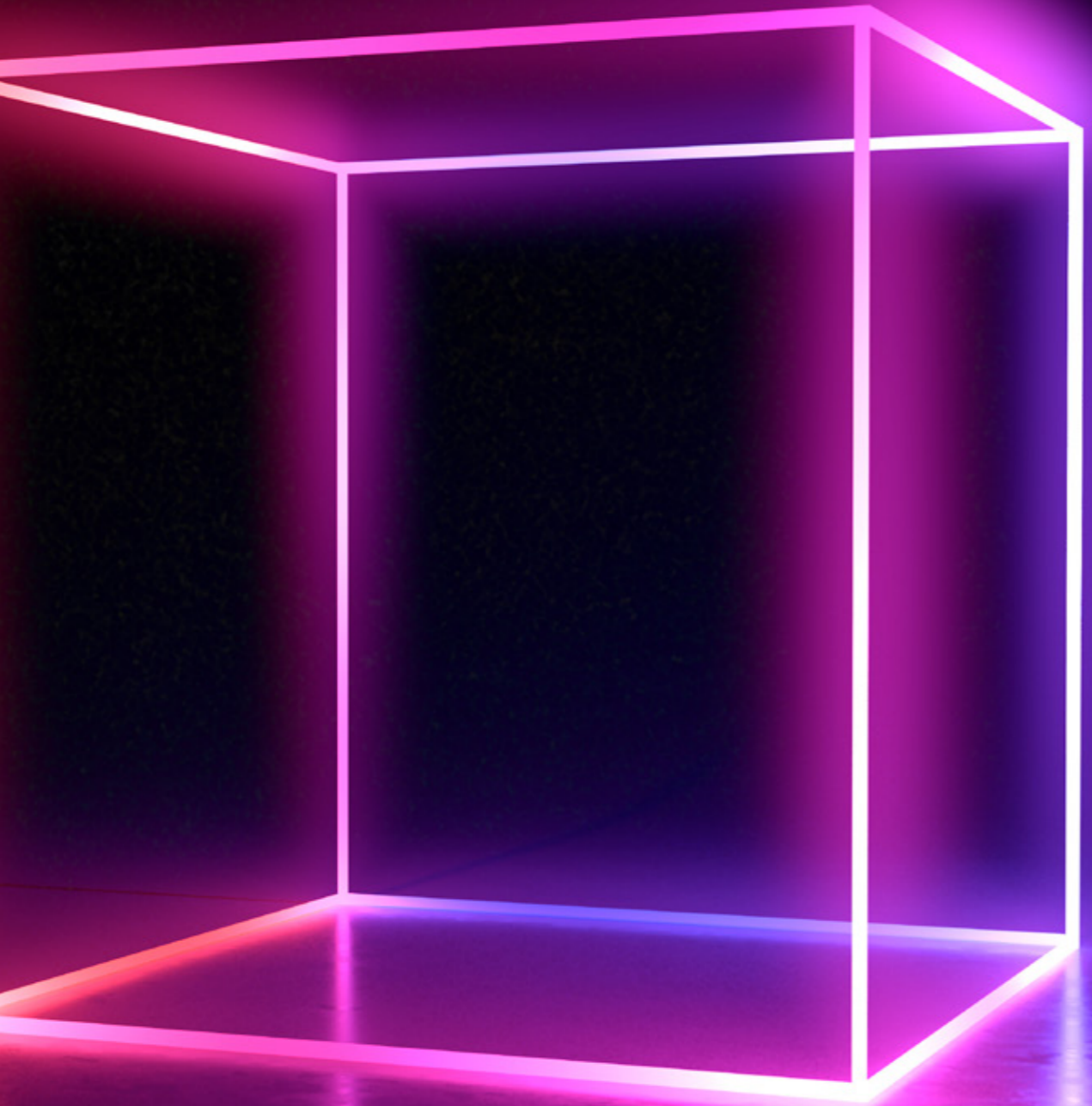
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HIGHLIGHT NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

PEOPLE AND PRACTICE RATHER THAN THEORY AND TECHNOLOGY

When a tech talent looks to the future, it is primarily cognitive and social competencies, rather than purely technical or disciplinary skills, that are believed to be most in demand in 2030. The answers not only give us a hint as to what they see as key for themselves, but also how they perceive what is generally missing in today's companies.





LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Surprisingly, for a technology-dominated programme, interpersonal and social skills are seen as key, particularly those related to cooperation, leadership and the ability to influence others. The ability to cooperate with different types of people, sensitivity to others, empathy and a willingness to change are qualities that tech talents believe will be important in the future. To a large extent, these are qualities required by the leaders of (today and) tomorrow.

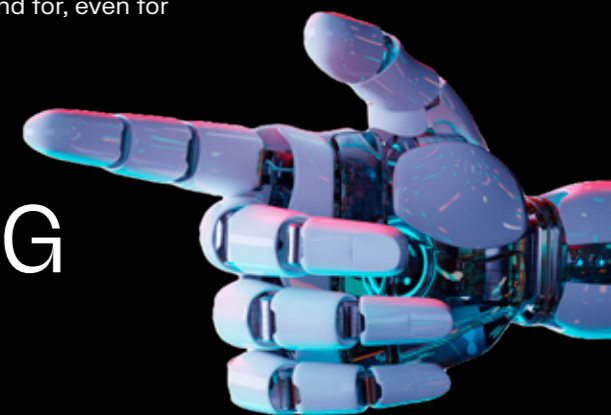
TECHNOLOGY IN PRACTICE

Although tech talents predict a growing need for social competencies in the future, they also believe that the demand for knowledge of the latest technology will increase. Mastering/practicing AI, Web3 and haptics are mentioned as abilities tech talents believe will be increasingly in demand by 2030.

It is clear, both explicitly and between the lines, that tech talents see a need for practical rather than theoretical skills. No matter how theoretically or technically sophisticated a profession is, there is always a craft, a best answer to "how to do it". It is this hands-on competence that tech talents see the demand for, even for themselves.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROBLEM SOLVING

Most responses mention innovation, creativity and drive as the most important competencies for the future. This category also includes initiative, critical thinking and the ability to see new solutions. These are areas where humans are still superior to, or at least compare favourably with, computers. They are also skills that are not always developed by traditional academic studies.



OFFER A CULTURE WHERE PEOPLE CAN GROW AND DEVELOP

At Volvo Group Digital & IT, more than 5,000 people currently work on the development, delivery and support of IT solutions. However, this is not enough to meet future skills needs in digitalisation, according to **Ylva Schéle**, Head of Human Resources and Organization Development.

With the major changes taking place in the automotive industry, the need for tech talents are high. Software developers, UX designers, data analysts, cyber security experts, cloud computing specialists and IT architects are some examples of the skills in demand within the Volvo Group.

- We are investing heavily in digital transformation because it is fully in line with our overall purpose – to create the world we want to live in. To maintain our leading position, however, we need to retain our existing employees and attract new talent, says Ylva Schéle.

To achieve this, Ylva believes that the most important thing an employer can offer is an attractive culture where people can grow and develop.

- Creating a culture that encourages continuous learning and development is something that is close to our hearts. For example, we have built a learning platform in collaboration with VGU (Volvo Group University) where our employees can participate in training programmes or become certified in new areas. We provide arenas where colleagues can inspire and develop each other through networks or academies within our organisation. Since we are a global company, there are also good opportunities to develop by changing jobs within the Group, even beyond national borders.

Another important factor in creating a good working environment is work-life balance. This is something that today's tech talents value highly, which Ylva fully understands.

- I totally agree that this is super important. You can't be creative and contribute if you don't have a good work-



YLVA SCHÉLE
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES
AND ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT,
VOLVO GROUP DIGITAL & IT

life balance. Negative stress and lack of recovery is therefore something we take very seriously. Our leaders have an important role in monitoring how much their team members work and how they feel. In addition, we map the organisation through anonymous surveys to identify those who are not making their voices heard. If necessary, we in HR go in and talk to the team or involve the occupational health service.

According to Ylva, the culture and mindset of when and how work should be done has changed a lot in recent years.

- Working from home and other types of flexible solutions are commonplace today. Our leaders are used to working with team members located all over the world and know how to engage and motivate the team. At the same time, it can also be good to come into the office from time to time. It's important to meet your colleagues and be creative together. I also think we need to realise that we are whole people and not just talking heads on a screen.

When you work with IT and tech, it can sometimes feel like you are far away from the business itself, which in Volvo's case is about transport and infrastructure solutions. But Ylva believes that digitalisation will make more people feel involved.

- It is no longer just about products and services, but about the company's ambition to contribute to a better world. It is important to be proud of the company you work for and feel that you are contributing to the products and services we offer our customers. I remember when I saw the first fully electric bus in Gothenburg. I could feel that I was part of it. Nothing beats that! No matter how small our contributions are, we are all important in realising Volvo's vision, concludes Ylva.



YOU CAN'T BE CREATIVE
IF YOU DON'T HAVE A GOOD
WORK-LIFE BALANCE.



THREE DEMANDS FOR FUTURE EMPLOYERS

In summary, this year's report concludes that from the perspective of tech talents, there are three key issues that future employers must understand and act on.

1

PROFITABILITY AND GROWTH – HAND IN HAND WITH DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE BALANCE

There is a gap between how tech talents' believe working life should be and how they perceive it actually is. There is a potential or real conflict between 'soft' and 'hard' and 'long term' and 'short term' that needs to be resolved if companies and talents are to develop in tandem. The same applies to the tech talents focus on work-life balance.

2

LEARNING CULTURE – FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Creating a culture of continuous learning is the most important thing an organisation can do to retain tech talents. Without a learning culture, there is no development and no retention of top talent.

3

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT – FROM THEORY AND TECHNOLOGY TO PEOPLE AND PRACTICE

Of course, tech talents are technology-focused and interested. But when they reflect on what's missing and what's needed for a successful working life, the focus is not on "another programming language". It's about future competencies that are not taught at university – such as creativity, leadership, social skills and the craft of working life.

HENRIK GREEN
INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

WE MUST DRIVE THE CHANGES THAT MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE THE FASTEST

After nearly three decades in senior management positions at Volvo Cars, Henrik Green has a wealth of experience in running organisations through change. Here he gives his views on what challenges and opportunities companies can expect in the future.

The strong sustainability focus we see today will increase even more in the future and the biggest steps towards a sustainable society will be taken by companies, rather than by governments and state institutions. This is according to Henrik Green, who also believes that the biggest challenge for future leaders is to understand and prioritise the major changes that need to be made.

- Some changes are small and easy to implement but have little impact. Others are large and complex, but may produce transformative results. As a leader, you must have the skills to recognise the difference between big and small and work on the big issues first. That way, you will drive the changes that make the biggest difference the fastest. It's also important to be able to weed out solutions that may seem environmentally friendly but - when you dig deeper and take in the whole supply chain - they're actually not.

However, working on sustainability not only presents challenges, but also great opportunities.

- Consumers want to consume sustainable products and investors want to invest in sustainable businesses. Sustainable businesses are also a strong attraction for

the younger generation. There is a positive momentum in all this that creates obvious opportunities for businesses. Another, more hidden, opportunity is that many underestimate the need for green energy and sustainable raw materials, which I believe will be in short supply until 2040. Being early in securing your supply of climate-neutral raw materials and energy sources provides another competitive advantage.

Although the digital transformation is in full swing, Henrik believes that very few companies know how they would actually operate in a completely climate-neutral world. Paradigm shifts always involve turbulence and to navigate correctly, Henrik believes that organisations need to be very malleable and work at short intervals.

- I think you have to start with a small core of expertise that identifies what needs to be done, then you can let it be integrated into the organisation step by step. New technologies will solve a number of problems and if you are a small company, you can probably to some extent expect this development to be driven by others and be a "fast follower". On the other hand, if you are a large or unique player, you need to be the one leading the technological development.

Many companies will also need to change their organisations and business models, and in this journey of change, Henrik sees that tech talents can contribute in many ways.

- They contribute with their expertise in everything from new materials to digital systems, but also with their values and their willingness to change. When developing new business models, it is often the younger generation that sees the way forward, as they are not stuck in the mindset of how things have been done in the past.

This report shows that companies that have a clear purpose and core values, and offer a sustainable working life, are better placed to attract the tech talents of the future. But Henrik also highlights another aspect that is important to consider.

- Even if you do everything right, you also need to be seen and heard in the right way, as it is a competitive market. Working on your employer brand and allying yourself with people who know how to recruit tech talents will be crucial to securing future skills, Henrik concludes.



ABOUT TECH TALENT REPORT

The Tech Talent Report is based on a survey conducted by Kairos Future and includes responses from 506 tech talents aged 20-35 living in Sweden. The respondents were either at the beginning of their career in IT/tech or studying a technical programme at university or college. The questions had both response options and the possibility of open answers that were compiled using AI-assisted text analysis. Data collection took place between 30th November and 7th December 2022.

ABOUT NEXER TECH TALENT

Nexer Tech Talent are target group experts that help companies accelerate their digital transformation and growth through talent programmes for critical future skills. Based on research and analysis, Nexer Tech Talent helps its clients attract, develop and retain the tech talents of the future. The company is part of Nexer Group – a tech company with deep roots in Swedish entrepreneurship and innovation. Nexer has over 2500 employees in 15 countries.

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We would like to thank everyone who contributed!

