



Meeting the Demands of the Future Workforce: Soft Skills Training for the AI Revolution

Whitepaper

Overview

The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on employment is a topic of intense debate. Some estimates predict that AI could impact nearly **300 million jobs globally**¹ while automating up to 46% of required tasks in office and administrative roles.

However, as AI continues its relentless advance, new opportunities are emerging. This is partly due to the increasing importance of 'soft' or 'human' skills, such as emotional intelligence and empathy, that differentiate us from AI systems.

This fact is supported by recent data from Deloitte, which reports that soft skill-intensive work will account for **almost two-thirds of all jobs by 2030**². In addition, '**Pearson Skills Outlook: Power Skills report**³' found that the top five most sought-after skills (now and in the short-term future) are all human skills.

In the era of the AI revolution, the **balance between job creation and elimination**⁴ remains uncertain, opening up a realm of possibilities. But what is clear is that workers need to adapt their capabilities and embrace new roles that complement AI systems through the adoption of soft skills. To achieve this, however, there needs to be a change in **educational and learning environments**⁵ to help people navigate this technological revolution and find new avenues for employment in the future labor

Use this whitepaper to:

- » Understand the evolving landscape of AI, its extensive applications, limitations and potential impact on the world of work.
- » Recognize how AI augments human capabilities and why soft skills are indispensable in the age of automation.
- » Discover the significance of digital credentials in validating and demonstrating soft skills, and learn how to implement effective digital credentialing programs to support these skills.
- » Navigate the AI revolution with strategies for success.

force. But can learning and training providers adapt their offerings to meet the ever-evolving needs of individuals seeking to fulfill workplace expectations of the future?

With technology changing so quickly, it is vital that workers develop lifelong learning habits. They need to be motivated to reskill and upskill to remain employable in the AI-powered era and reap the long-term benefits.

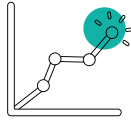
"The education system will need to adapt to prepare individuals for the changing labor market. At the same time, recent IT advances offer new and potentially more widely accessible ways to access education."

The National Academies of Sciences

Increasing Adoption of AI In the Workplace



Goldman Sachs⁶ says generative AI could impact 300 million jobs



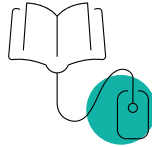
AI market size is expected to reach \$407 billion⁹ by 2027



91.5% of leading businesses are investing in AI¹⁰ on an ongoing basis



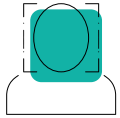
According to the World Economic Forum, AI is projected to create around 97 million new jobs⁷, potentially countering workforce displacement concerns



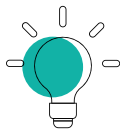
Educating and training staff will be the biggest reason⁸ the global AI market doesn't grow even faster

Leading To Increasing Demand for Soft Skills

While AI is gaining momentum, soft skills' value and long-term importance are increasing.



Soft skill intensive occupations will account for two-thirds¹¹ of all jobs by 2030, compared to half of all jobs in 2000



Soft skills of employees could increase revenue by more than \$90,000



The global soft skills training market size is currently worth \$23.64 billion and is expected to reach \$47.16 billion¹² by 2027

What Skills Are In Demand?

Pearson Skills Outlook: Power Skills report¹³ finds that while technical skills and expertise remain highly valued, the top five most sought-after skills (now and in the short-term future) are all human skills. The skills that need the greatest improvement and investment include **collaboration, customer focus, personal learning & mastery, achievement focus & cultural and social intelligence.**

Equally, Pearson Skills Outlook: Employee View report¹⁴ found that employees value soft skills like **problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership** in today's tech-driven world.

Why Are Soft Skills Important in The Age Of AI?

According to Professor John McCarthy¹⁵, AI is “the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence, but AI does not have to confine itself to methods that are biologically observable.”

It implies that there are certain “human” skills that AI struggles to replicate. Despite AI investment set to reach \$232 billion by 2025¹⁶, experts advise that the benefits of machine learning and robotic process automation technology depend heavily on the quality of a company’s human skills and capabilities. This also includes people’s attitudes towards technology.

Although AI may excel in its computational capabilities, soft skills, emotional intelligence, creativity, adaptability, and critical thinking, hold the key to unlocking the true potential of AI.

Limitations of AI in the workforce include:

- » Lack of human judgment, intuition, and nuanced decision-making in complex situations.
 - » Difficulty comprehending context, social, cultural, and emotional nuances, affecting effective human interaction.
 - » Ethical concerns due to biases in training data perpetuating discrimination and inequality.
 - » Limited creativity and innovation compared to human thinking.
 - » Dependence on human oversight, maintenance, and updates for proper functioning and ethical alignment.
- » Trust and transparency are challenges due to the opacity of AI decision-making processes.
 - » Security and privacy risks require ongoing efforts to safeguard against breaches and protect sensitive data.
 - » Potential job displacement necessitating reskilling and upskilling for affected individuals.

It is predicted that by 2030, social and emotional skills such as leadership and communication will be in high demand, growing by 24%¹⁷.

Soft skills are crucial in the Age of AI for several reasons:

- » Collaboration: Soft skills enable effective teamwork between humans and AI systems, fostering cooperation and coordination.
- » Emotional Intelligence: Soft skills like empathy and active listening are vital for meaningful human interactions and personalized experiences.
- » Ethical Decision-Making: Soft skills such as critical thinking address ethical concerns associated with AI technology.
- » Problem-Solving: Soft skills empower individuals to tackle complex problems beyond AI capabilities.
- » Adaptability: Soft skills foster resilience and continuous learning in a rapidly changing AI-driven environment.
- » Leadership: Soft skills are essential for guiding organizations through AI implementation and ethical considerations.
- » Creativity and Innovation: Soft skills drive imaginative thinking and innovative solutions alongside AI.

Rather than displacing humans, AI is complemented by the human abilities of empathy, critical thinking, and creativity. So, to ensure ongoing success, learning and training organizations must support their learners to prioritize developing and demonstrating their soft skills.

Digital Credentials in the Age of AI

Learning and training organizations can leverage digital credentials to promote soft skills training to learners and bridge the skills gap AI creates.

Digital credentials are verified proof of a learner's competency and skills. They are the online replacement for paper-based certificates – but unlike traditional certificates, digital credentials provide organizations with the means of clearly and easily validating soft skills that can be difficult to demonstrate and prove.

Using a platform like [Acclaim](#)¹⁸, learners are able to easily share with future employers their badges for qualifications like leadership, critical thinking, and creativity, setting them up for success in the workplace. Here are some key benefits of digital credentials:

- » **Standardized validation** - Digital credentials offer a credible and standardized way to validate soft skills, adding credibility to demonstrated abilities.
- » **Enhanced visibility** - Digital credentials enable individuals to showcase their soft skills on professional platforms, maximizing visibility to potential employers.

- » **Soft skills credentials** - Training and education providers can offer digital credentials specifically focused on soft skills development to validate and recognize learners' proficiency in areas such as teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.
- » **Evidence-based assessments** - By including rich [metadata](#)¹⁹, digital credentials provide clear evidence of the skills acquired and the assessment completed, instilling confidence in employers about the competence in soft skills.
- » **Customized learning pathways** - Learning and training organizations providers can use digital credentialing systems to design personalized learning pathways targeting soft skills development. Learners can identify their skill gaps through assessments and evaluations and access tailored training programs to enhance their soft skills.
- » **Continuous learning and growth** - Digital credentials reflect an individual's commitment to ongoing development and adaptability to evolving workplace needs.
- » **Facilitating networking opportunities** - Training and learning organizations can integrate digital credentials with professional networking platforms. By allowing learners to display their digital credentials on platforms like LinkedIn, they can increase their visibility to potential employers and industry peers.
- » **Micro-credentialing** - Training and education providers can break down soft skills training into bite-sized modules or micro-credentials. These smaller credentials focus on specific soft skills, making the learning process more manageable and targeted.

[Uncover further insights on validating soft skills through digital credentials in our webinar](#)²⁰.



Best Practices for Demonstrating Soft Skills on Acclaim Digital Credentials

Follow these steps to help your learners to continue to develop and showcase their soft skills with Acclaim Digital Credentials:

- 01 Choose Relevant Soft Skills:** Identify the specific soft skills to highlight through your digital credentials. These could include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, or other relevant soft skills.
- 02 Provide Clear Badge Criteria:** Provide specific examples and evidence that demonstrate proficiency in the selected soft skills. This can include projects, accomplishments, or experiences where you successfully applied and showcased those soft skills.
- 03 Offer Recommendations:** Suggest learning pathways to help learners enhance their soft skills or acquire new ones.
- 04 Encourage Social Sharing:** Educate learners on the benefits of sharing their Acclaim Digital Credentials. Emphasize how displaying these credentials on professional networking platforms, digital resumes, or online portfolios can enhance their visibility to potential employers and collaborators.

Assessment Checklist: Combating the Soft Skills Demand in the Age of AI

As a learning and training provider, it's essential to equip your learners for today's workforce. Use this checklist to assess their initiatives in response to the demand for soft skills in the world of AI. Identify areas for improvement and tailor training programs to meet their specific needs, ensuring readiness for the evolving workforce. Here's what you can ask:

- » Have you observed the impact of AI on your job or industry?
- » Have you recognized the increasing importance of soft skills in the workplace?
- » Are you aware of the specific soft skills that are in high demand in your industry?
- » Have you attended any training programs or courses focused on developing soft skills?
- » Have these programs helped you enhance your soft skills?
- » Have you adapted your soft skills to complement and leverage the benefits of AI?
- » Are you actively seeking opportunities for continuous learning and skill development?
- » Do you regularly seek feedback from supervisors, peers, or mentors regarding your soft skills?

Fostering the Synergy

As AI continues to revolutionize how we work, individuals must understand the vital role that soft skills play in harnessing the power of AI technology. By combining these essential human skills with technical expertise, they will be able to meet the demands of the new challenging workplace.

Training providers and educational institutions play a crucial role in facilitating this synergy by offering training programs that enhance and showcase individuals' soft skills. By doing so, they enable individuals to effectively collaborate with AI systems and leverage their unique human abilities to enhance productivity and innovation. Most importantly, individuals who can effectively demonstrate their soft skills alongside technical competencies will stand out and maintain a competitive edge in the evolving workforce.



Want to Learn More?

Acclaim is the network of choice where 3,500+ certification, assessment, and training providers and employers issue their credentials. With a notable 76 Net Promoter Score, our secure, user-friendly, and data-rich platform is a reliable choice for supporting your organization and learners. To explore how digital credentials can contribute to your organization's growth and business goals, schedule a demo now.

Endnotes

- 1** Goldman Sachs says generative A.I. could impact 300 million jobs — here's which ones <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/03/28/ai-automation-could-impact-300-million-jobs-heres-which-ones.html>
- 2** Soft skills for business success Deakin Co <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-deakin-soft-skills-business-success-170517.pdf>
- 3** Pearson Skills Outlook: Power Skills <https://plc.pearson.com/en-GB/insights/pearson-skills-outlook-powerskills>
- 4** AI, Robotics, and the Future of Jobs <https://www.pewresearch.org/inter-net/2014/08/06/future-of-jobs/>
- 5** Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf
- 6** Goldman Sachs says generative A.I. could impact 300 million jobs — here's which ones <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/03/28/ai-automation-could-impact-300-million-jobs-heres-which-ones.html>
- 7** 24 Top AI Statistics And Trends In 2023 https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/ai-statistics/#sources_section
- 8** ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STATISTICS FOR 2023 <https://www.searchlogistics.com/learn/statistics/artificial-intelligence-statistics/>
- 9** 24 Top AI Statistics And Trends In 2023 <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/ai-statistics/#:~:text=AI%20is%20expected%20to%20see,technologies%20in%20the%20coming%20years.>
- 10** 30+ Artificial Intelligence Statistics and Facts for 2023 <https://connect.comptia.org/blog/artificial-intelligence-statistics-facts>
- 11** Soft skills for business success DeakinCo. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-deakin-soft-skills-business-success-170517.pdf>
- 12** Global Soft Skills Training Market to Reach \$47.16 Billion <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/global-soft-skills-training-market-to-reach-47-16-billion-301618215.html>
- 13** Pearson Skills Outlook: Power Skills <https://plc.pearson.com/en-GB/insights/pearson-skills-outlook-powerskills>
- 14** Pearson Skills Outlook: Employee View <https://plc.pearson.com/en-GB/insights/pearson-skills-outlook-employee-view>
- 15** What is Artificial Intelligence? <https://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/whatisai.pdf>
- 16** KPMG in the US <https://kpmg.com/us/en/home.html>
- 17** How to Thrive in the Age of AI Part 5 - Soft Skills, Hard Impact <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-thrive-age-ai-part-5-soft-skills-hard-impact-benjamin-rosen/>
- 18** Digital Credentials <https://info.credly.com/product/acclaim>
- 19** Metadata Mapping <https://info.credly.com/product/metadata>
- 20** How to Validate Soft Skills Through Digital Credentials <https://learn.credly.com/webinars/how-to-validate-soft-skills-through-digital-credentials-webinar-slides>

About Credly by Pearson

Credly by Pearson operates the world's largest and most-connected digital credentialing network: Acclaim. Acclaim is a digital badging platform that offers the most comprehensive features to design and issue badges, enterprise-class functionality to scale and manage programs, and enhanced analytics to measure success. Tens of millions of credentials have been earned and are managed on Acclaim. More than 43,000 earner profiles are updated every day, and over 650,000 digital credentials are shared by earners each month. This enterprise-class infrastructure is why the top training brands, certification providers, higher education institutions, professional associations, and employers trust Acclaim to support their digital credential programs.