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REPORT

Modern Skills for 2022

Measuring the strength of workforce skills and ensuring employees have what they need to face the future



Questionmark Viewpoint

December 2021

www.questionmark.com

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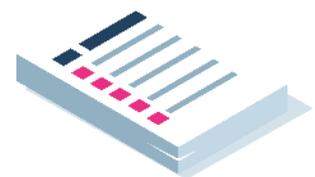
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Introduction: change continues to be the watchword for 2022

“Change is the new constant.” It’s already become a cliché, but it continues to ring true. Business leaders across different sectors and industries agree that volatility will remain a primary business challenge in 2022.¹

As a result, employers must promote skills among their workforce that will enable them to manage that change. They require team members to use the new technologies that are increasingly commonplace. It’s vital that employees have the skills to cope with new ways of working. As the business environment continues to evolve, leaders need workers who can quickly adapt.

Each organization must be clear what skills they need to thrive. But knowing what they require is only half the battle. They need real and reliable information on the prevalence of these modern skills among their workforce. Then they need development and recruitment strategies that ensure they can hold on to what they have and acquire what they need. At all times, they need evidence that these strategies are working.

This report:

- Looks at the common skills which employers will need in 2022
- Sets out some of the challenges to securing these among the workforce
- Shows how assessment with the Questionmark platform can help employers obtain them



¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/02/ceos-across-economy-agree-on-one-big-2022-prediction-more-volatility.html>

Ten crucial skills for 2022

The precise skills that the workforce requires will differ among organizations. However, ten crucial modern skills are increasingly sought after regardless of industry or job role.

1. **Communication and collaboration** – a LinkedIn poll found that the ability to communicate and collaborate was judged the most important skill for those wishing to succeed in the world of work.² Commentators note that failures of communication are the cause of countless business failures.
2. **Technical literacy** – forecasters expect organizations to continue delivering their services and operations digitally in 2022. The number of jobs that can be performed effectively without a high degree of digital fluency will continue to diminish.
3. **Critical thinking and problem solving** – CEOs from different industries agree that there will be no “return to normal” in 2022.³ Employers need people who can think around issues, reflect on their circumstances and form sound judgments.
4. **Artificial intelligence (AI)** – analysts expect artificial intelligence to grow at an annual rate of 33% until 2028.⁴ Future-ready workers need the skills to adapt as work is increasingly shared with machines.
5. **Data literacy** – advancements in AI and machine learning will generate more data. Firms can use such information to their advantage. But it’s crucial their people have the skills to use it and understand it properly.
6. **Empathy** – as teams are increasingly dispersed geographically, the ability to understand other people’s viewpoints and circumstances is being recognized as a business-critical skill.

² <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-collaboration-communication-vital-skills-successful-bernard-marr/>

³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/12/02/ceos-across-economy-agree-on-one-big-2022-prediction-more-volatility.html>

⁴ <https://www.aretove.com/what-can-we-expect-from-big-data-analytics-in-2022>

7. **Teamwork** – it has always been essential for people within an organization to work well together. But as employers continue to embrace new ways of working, these skills require rethinking and sharpening.
8. **Cybersecurity** – experts predict that 2022 will be another year where organizational practice comes under tighter scrutiny and the pace of change of threats demanding highly adaptable workforces.⁵
9. **Creativity** – innovation demands the collision of ideas that comes naturally to teams working in close proximity, solving common problems. With teams less likely to sit together, those teams need to design and discover new forms of engagement.
10. **Adaptability** – employers need people who can adjust to changing circumstances.



⁵ <https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/96503-expect-2022-to-be-the-year-of-cybersecurity>

Struggling for skills: common challenges in securing crucial skills and knowledge

Four common challenges make it difficult for employers to secure the skills they need among the workforce:

1. **Staff retention** – in a phrase dubbed “the great resignation” millions of people are quitting their jobs.⁶ While a degree of employee turnover can be beneficial to an organization, employers risk losing the team members who have the crucial skills that firms need to thrive.
2. **Skills shortage** – some 54% of global companies report a talent shortage. This is higher than at any point over the last decade.⁷
3. **Universities struggling with demand for new skills** – senior figures from universities have said that university education alone will not be enough to provide young people with the digital skills they need for today’s workplace.⁸ Employers cannot assume graduates will come to them “work ready”.
4. **Resistance to change** – Gartner found that employee’s resistance is one of the biggest six barriers to digital transformation.⁹ This can impede the development of crucial skills.



⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/08/jolts-october-report-great-resignation-slowed-job-openings-jumped.html>

⁷ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinecastrillon/2021/09/22/why-us-talent-shortages-are-at-a-ten-year-high/?sh=171ec20f79c2>

⁸ <https://news.microsoft.com/en-gb/2021/11/17/universities-we-cant-solve-the-uks-digital-skills-gap-on-our-own/>

⁹ <https://www.ideas4allinnovation.com/innovators/gartner-barriers-digital-transformation/>

How Questionmark can help

With our online assessment platform, employers can get a clear read of the strength of skills across their workforce. With this reliable and valid data, they can make better decisions around securing the modern skills they need.

1. Identifying areas of strength and weakness

Online assessments with Questionmark reveal the strength and weaknesses of skills across the workforce. The platform makes patterns and trends easy to spot. It's possible to see if there are areas of common weakness or if a particular team is struggling with certain skills.

Employers can use the platform to create assessments relevant to their business need. Assessment content is easy to create. Our item bank function makes it easy to store questions and transfer them between assessments.

Questionmark also provides ready-made assessment content designed to assess specific skills. These include:

- **Questionmark Data Literacy by Cambridge Assessment** – enables employers to measure the data literacy skills across their organizations. The results show which team members can understand, apply, communicate with and evaluate data in their job role. It can identify training needs.
- **Questionmark Thinking Skills by Cambridge Assessment** – helps organizations and universities identify and select candidates with the highest potential, using a test of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.
- **Questionmark Cybersecurity for home-based workers** – allows organizations to identify whether employees have the required cybersecurity knowledge to meet their compliance requirements and avoid cyber breaches when working from home

2. Identify training priorities and check the effectiveness of training

Assessments make it easier for leaders to determine training priorities.

Specifically, assessments with Questionmark help by:

- **Reducing wasted training** – assessments will reveal which team members really need to participate in training. This prevents people being trained on something they already know how to do.
- **Increase engagement and learning** – According to memory expert Professor Roddy Roediger, we are far more likely to remember information once we have been called upon to reconstruct it. Studies have shown that students who recreate what they have learned in their own words remember more information than those that simply read and reread it.¹⁰
- **Improve the effectiveness of training programs** – tests during and after training will show what people have actually learned. If people are not learning what they should, trainers can revise the content. The Questionmark item analysis function makes it clear exactly what questions people are struggling with, which will highlight the part of the training program that is failing to make the necessary impact.

3. Help employers hire the right people and onboard them better

Assessing candidates before appointing them helps leaders make better hiring decisions. Specifically, assessments:

- **Indicate which candidates have the skills for the job** – some 78% of job candidates confess to lying on their resume or during an interview.¹¹ Checking the skills of candidates with assessments reveals which of them can really do what they say they can.
- **Reduce unconscious bias** – by providing an objective read on which candidates have the skills for the job, assessments can help challenge any cognitive biases that have occurred during the recruitment process. This can help employers ensure they are truly getting the best staff.
- **Support better onboarding and training** – pre-hire and post-hire assessments show what a new starter's biggest development areas are likely to be. This data can be used to make the onboarding process and initial training more meaningful.

¹⁰ <https://www.questionmark.com/advice-from-cognitive-psychologist-rodny-roediger-on-using-retrieval-practice-to-aid-learning/>

¹¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/19/how-many-job-seekers-lie-on-their-job-application.html>

4. *Support career development with internal certification programs*

Creating internal certification programs can be an effective way of enhancing a sense of career development. Human beings like to be recognized and rewarded. Gaining a certificate upon completion of training, or at a certain career stage, increases motivation with training and encourages team members to learn new skills.

The Questionmark platform can specifically help by:

- ***Ensuring certification programs are robustly assessed*** – in order to achieve the certificate, candidates should first sit an internal assessment. This helps leaders ensure they are genuinely learning new skills and knowledge and increases the sense of reward.
- ***Protecting the integrity of the program*** – many Questionmark platform features, such as randomized questions, help protect against cheating, ensuring that everyone can trust the results. When the stakes are high, we provide a range of proctoring options to create a secure online exam environment.
- ***Digital badges*** – the platform can issue a digital badge to successful candidates. They can display it on their email signature and on their social media profiles. This increases their sense of achievement and motivates people to participate.



Conclusion: knowledge is power

The next year looks set to be another of constant change and volatility. An organization's people will be at the heart of ensuring firms can thrive in an ever-changing business environment.

For the best chance of success, workers need the skills that help them manage change, work well together and take advantage of new opportunities. Employers can seek to secure these modern skills through training, development and recruitment. But to do this well, they need real and reliable information on the current strength of skills across their workforce.

Assessments with Questionmark give employers crucial data on the skills of their people. With this information they can make better decisions on managing the workforce and ensure they have the modern skills to face the future.

We work with employers around the world helping measure the skills of their workforce. Get in touch for a conversation about how we can help.





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About Questionmark

We help organizations and their people unlock their potential to deliver better performance.

Questionmark provides a secure enterprise-grade assessment platform and professional services to leading organizations around the world, delivered with care and unequalled expertise. Its full-service online assessment tool and professional services help customers to improve their performance and meet their compliance requirements. Questionmark enables organizations to unlock their potential by delivering assessments which are valid, reliable and fair, which can be defended.

Questionmark offers secure powerful integration with learning management systems (LMS), learning record stores (LRS) and proctoring services making it easy to bring everything together in one place. Questionmark's cloud-based assessment management platform offers rapid deployment, scalability for high-volume test delivery, 24/7 support and the peace-of-mind of secure, audited U.S., Australian and European-based data centers.

Working with Questionmark

To further explore how Questionmark could work for your organization, or to book a free consultation and demo, please see: <https://www.questionmark.com/request-demo/>

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