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# Technology & Consulting

## Segment Burst

Winter 2023

1. AI and automation – upskilling in a tech-driven workplace
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# AI and automation – upskilling in a tech driven workplace

AI and automation are helping employers advance human skillsets. This change is impacting the way work gets done by removing mundane and repetitive tasks which allows humans to complete more engaging work.

This shift impacts workforces across many industries, especially those in tech and manufacturing. New research from Protiviti, in partnership with the University of Oxford, reveals that [86%](#) of workers feel emerging technologies, including AI, robotics, virtual workplaces, and computer-aided design, will change how work is done in the future. Additionally, 74% of the workforce have also accepted that working with new tech can create more career opportunities in the future.

Future tech advancements will eventually replace some manual tasks – but this can help businesses focus on upskilling talent for more creative and better-paying future roles.

According to [Word Economic Forum](#), 97 million new tech jobs will be created by 2025.

Many employers are providing workers with opportunities to advance their technical skillsets that will enable them to meet the demands of an ever-evolving technological landscape. For example:

- AI certifications on technology skills like Python coding and network engineering can bridge skill gaps and even open new opportunities in industries such as data science and robotics
- Digital marketing courses teach tech workers how to effectively develop and share ideas with co-workers

When deciding when and where to implement AI and other advanced technologies, employers must align efforts with the digital upskilling of workers. The benefits of working alongside technology must be clear so that workers don't feel like they are being replaced.

Organisational messaging can help workers embrace new technologies, making them understand how tech and people can collaborate and thrive together. Investing in human capital can improve worker retention rates and identify future industry leaders.

The logo for Pontoon, featuring the word "ponton" in a lowercase, white, sans-serif font. The letter "o" is stylized with a horizontal line through its center. The background of the entire slide is a dark, blue-toned image of a robotic hand holding a glowing blue sphere, with a blurred cityscape in the background.

**86%** of workers feel emerging technologies will change how work is done in the future [Unleash.ai](#)

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The background image shows a modern office interior. In the foreground, a man with glasses and a blue blazer is talking to a man in a denim jacket. In the background, two women are sitting at a desk, one of whom is waving. The office has wooden shelves with plants and a bright, open atmosphere.

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“To attract and retain this cohort, enterprises will need to be deliberate in providing seamless technology experiences, broader upskilling opportunities, and greater flexibility.”



– Shauzab Ladha, Global Segment Leader at Pontoon

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## Attracting the Gen Z tech worker

Widespread digital transformation across various industries, coupled with layoffs and negative press, has created a challenging hiring market for tech employers. On the bright side, students are actively choosing more technology and engineering fields of study, resulting in a tech-inclined workforce in the coming years. As hiring managers scramble to attract top talent, appealing to Gen Z is increasingly essential for building a future-proof workforce.

How can companies specifically appeal to Gen Z tech talent?

**Focus on DE&I:** A recent study by McKinsey showed that [60%](#) of Gen Z workers look for diversity in leadership of potential employers when job searching. Young and diverse talent wants to see people from similar backgrounds in senior level roles. Research suggests that women and non-binary individuals are more likely to apply when they see women in leadership.

**Targeted hiring campaigns:** Hiring for specific tech roles must be within a company's capabilities, as it requires expertise and knowledge to effectively assess a candidate's ability to perform the job. Employers should invest in becoming more visible on online job boards and building a highly attractive EVP to entice Gen Z talent. Improving employer brand will decrease time to fill, saving on recruiting costs, since candidates will be more familiar with the company's brand and culture.

Also, employers can foster positive interactions with diverse talent pools by proactively engaging women in university and in their first few years in the tech workforce. One example of tech candidate relationship building is [PayPal](#). The company publishes a Q&A with interns to showcase a day in the life at the company, increasing women, Black, Latino and Asian applications.

HR leaders must re-examine their talent strategy and create solid partnerships and candidate funnels with universities, tech trade schools and community colleges. Cultivating one-on-one connections with candidates with personalised emails asking open-ended questions about their career goals is a great place to start.

## Addressing the gender gap for women in tech roles

Despite widespread efforts across all industries to create more gender-diverse workplaces, executive roles in tech continue to see low gender parity.

According to McKinsey, across all industries only [86](#) women are promoted to manager positions for every 100 men. The gender gap for women in tech is even more evident, with just [52](#) women promoted for every 100 men.

McKinsey also reports that women are hired for only 34% of entry-level engineering and product positions and 26% of first-level manager jobs.

Employers should prioritise diversity in leadership as it has been reported to be linked to a company's financial performance.

Gender-diverse companies are up to [48%](#) more likely to outperform less gender-diverse companies.

Leaders must develop a systematic and strategic approach to advancing and promoting women in tech roles. This can include equal access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities, sponsorship for new talent, and widespread access to mentorship programmes.

When empowering women in tech, employers should look at the following:

**Skill building:** Equal access to skill training and opportunities on high visibility projects are needed to help advance within the organisations.

**Structure and support:** Encouraging connections to other female managers, mentors, matching programmes, and sponsors within the organisation can considerably boost female talent potential.

### Case study

Pontoon trained and hired 200 female IT employees for a Brazilian tech company in only 4 months. Our programme included:

- **Innovative media campaign and sourcing strategy** via digital platforms, print outlets, social media, and influencer marketing.
- **Relationship management** with sourcing specialists building trust with female candidates through recruiting transparency and engagement
- **Remote IT academy** was developed to fill in candidate skill gaps.

Read the full case study [here](#)