

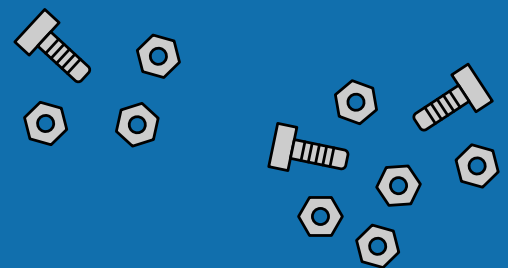
# What IT pros think about IT training

Insights on the hard and soft skills  
that matter in today's workplace



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# Introduction

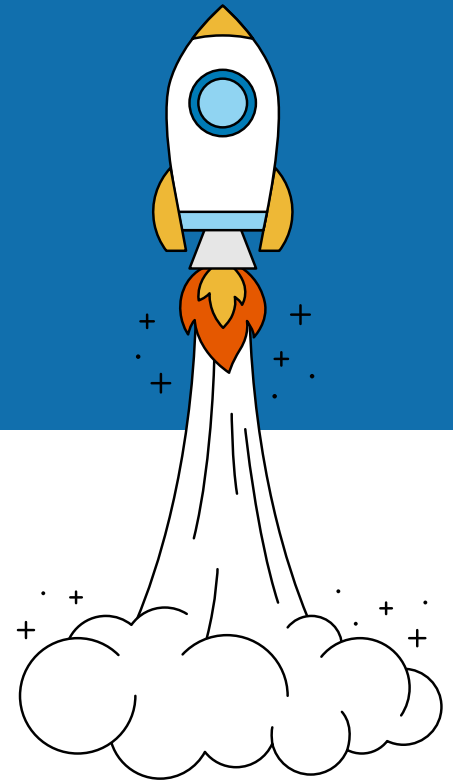
Once upon a time, there was a career ladder. You started as an entry-level employee. As time went by, you diligently learned the ropes and followed the rules. Over the years, your organization promoted you for your dedication. And after several decades with that same organization, you retired and reflected with pride on a long, successful career.

## Those days are long gone.

Today's organizations have a completely different outlook on recruiting, retaining, and rewarding talent. Employers expect workers to be more proactive than ever about their own career advancement, and to take responsibility for continually updating skills needed to succeed. The workplace evolves at a breakneck pace, and the number of technical and non-technical skills needed to advance seems to be growing exponentially.

Because they have broad skillsets, IT professionals are among the most qualified people in the modern workplace. Many have earned bachelor's or master's degrees. Some are self-taught experts equipped with certifications. Whether education comes from the classroom or on-the-job experience, one thing holds true—to remain relevant in the IT industry today, there's always more to be learned.

To uncover the top trends—and key challenges—with IT learning, we commissioned Spiceworks to survey nearly 200 IT pros across a wide range of industries. This report reveals key insights from the survey, including how IT pros are learning new skills, moving up in their careers, and staying ahead in an ever-shifting work environment.



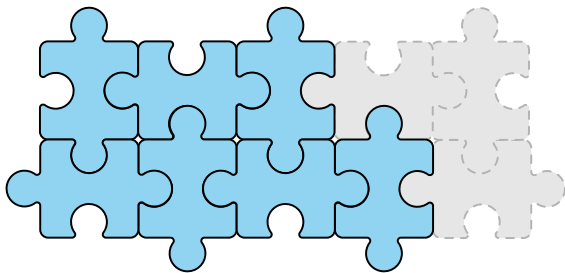


# IT training in the modern workplace



## The importance of hard and soft skills

Today's IT pros have to conquer a wide range of challenges every day. To be successful, they need to have a mix of both hard and soft skills—more than other professions. The typical IT pro needs to master a breadth of technical skills (programming languages, software applications, etc.) and non-technical skills (communication, leadership, etc.) And they have to keep them current to be successful in the ever-changing modern workplace.

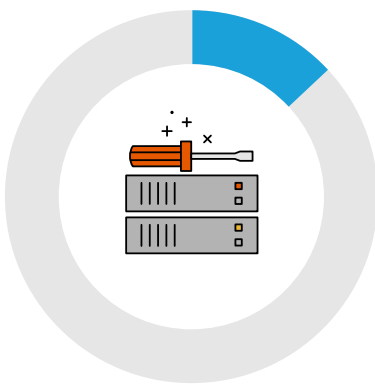


## Nearly 7 in 10 IT pros

who participated in the Spiceworks survey acknowledged that technical and non-technical skills are equally important to career advancement, especially for anyone aspiring to a leadership role.

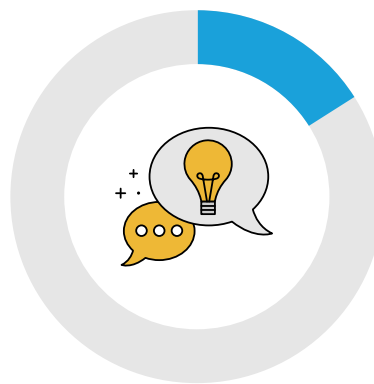
## The importance of skills for IT leadership roles

*Survey question: Which of the following would be **most important** if you were looking to move into an IT leadership role within your organization?*



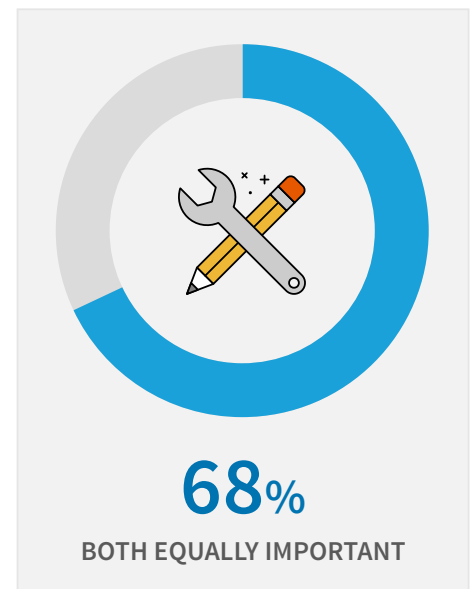
13%

IN-DEMAND TECHNICAL SKILLS



16%

NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS



68%

BOTH EQUALLY IMPORTANT

## Becoming a well-rounded IT pro

To stay relevant in their careers, IT pros are expected to continually expand their skillsets. Most survey respondents don't see themselves as experts in any single IT domain—although they possess substantial expertise in dealing with hardware and email, and this probably comes from interacting with these technologies regularly. A majority of the surveyed IT pros identified technologies relevant to security (73%), virtualization (65%), cloud (61%), and networking and infrastructure (52%) as key areas for further development.

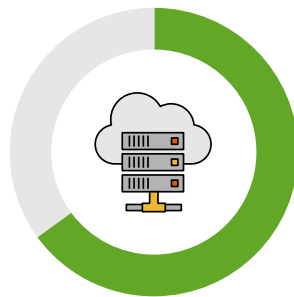
### Where your IT peers want to grow their expertise

*Survey question: Which of the following do you feel you need to further develop to remain a competitive IT pro **three years** from now?*



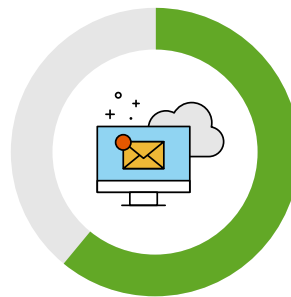
73%

SECURITY



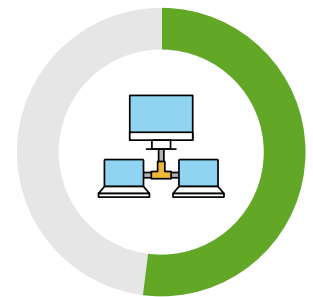
65%

VIRTUALIZATION



61%

CLOUD/HOSTED SERVICES



52%

NETWORKS/INFRASTRUCTURE



Beef up your tech skills with these related LinkedIn Learning courses:

[IT Security Career Paths and Certifications](#)

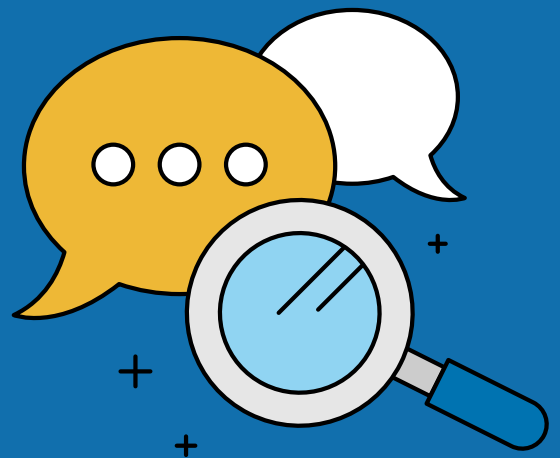
[Up and Running with VMware vSphere 6](#)

[Learning Cloud Computing: Core Concepts](#)

[Windows Server 2016: DNS](#)



# Hard truths about soft skills

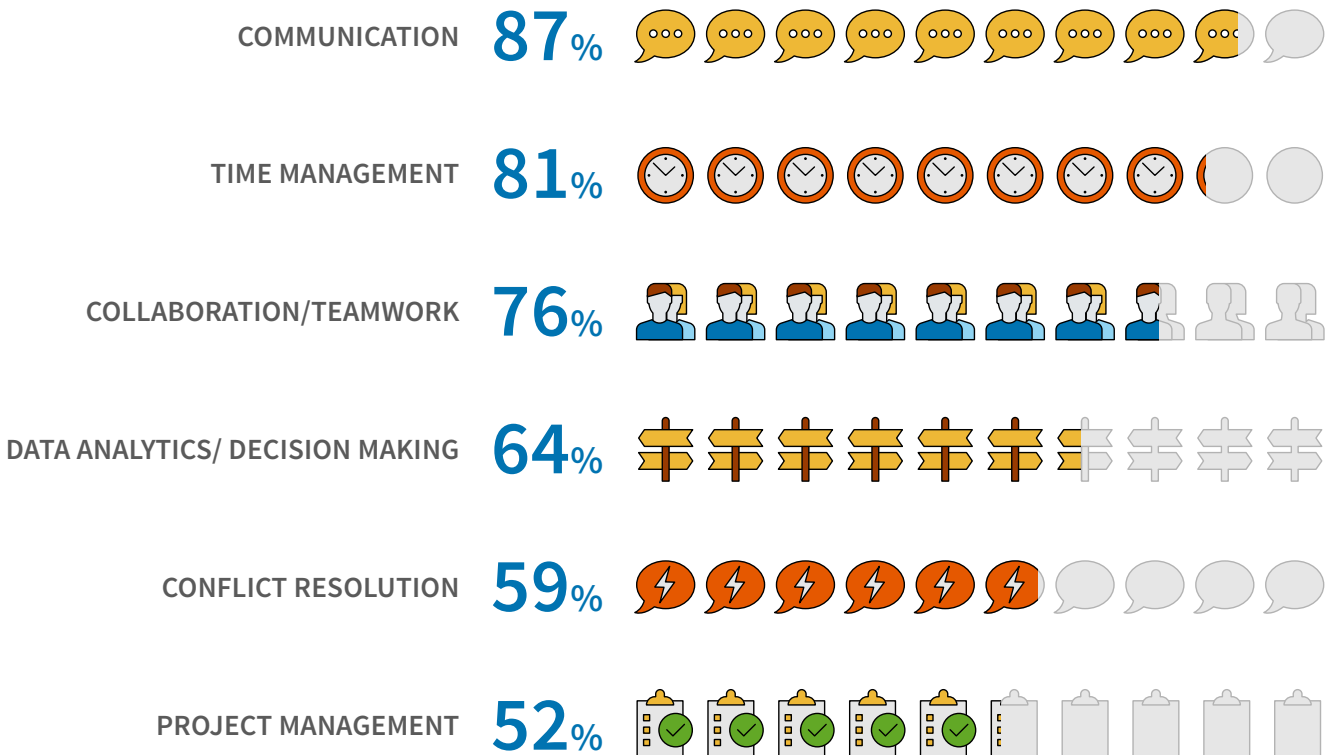


## The most coveted career skills aren't always technical

More often than not, technical skills get someone's foot in the door. After that, people skills play a large role in opening the doors that follow.

### The most important soft skills for career advancement

Survey question: How **important** do you feel the following “**non-technical**” skills are for you to advance your IT career? (Results show percentage saying “critical.”)



Communication, negotiation, teamwork, and conflict resolution are some of the important soft skills central to IT success today, especially in leadership positions. IT pros who possess soft skills are often considered better able to assess and convey the business value of IT projects to non-technical stakeholders, get their buy-in, and ultimately deliver on critical initiatives.



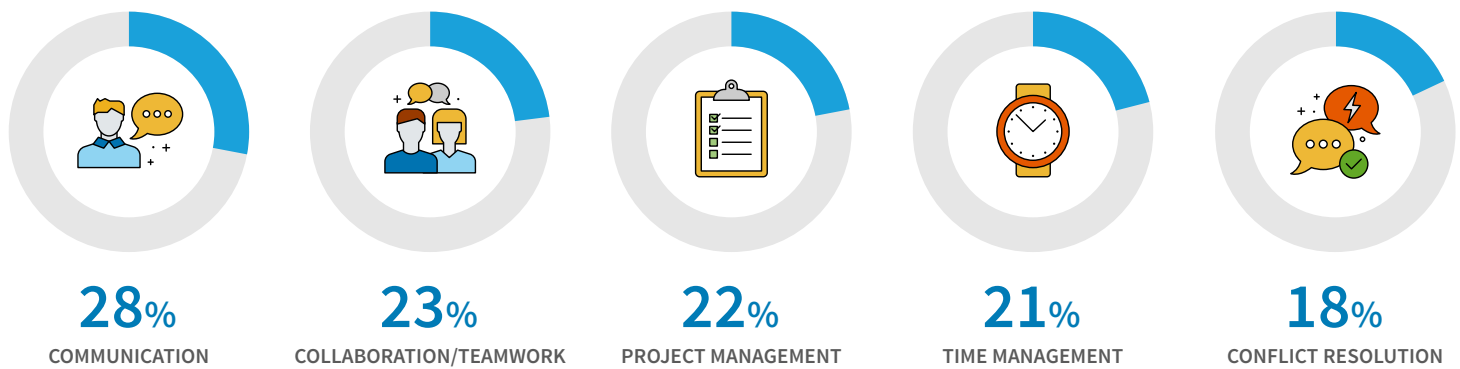
## Acquiring soft skills is an informal affair

While technical hard skills are typically learned during a formal education and later supplemented with on-the-job training, soft skills are rarely taught in school or at work. If you're an IT professional looking to become a leader, chances are you need to take personal responsibility for learning and applying soft skills to your daily workplace interactions.

Many organizations don't provide learning resources for soft skills. Among the surveyed IT pros, **43% indicated their organizations didn't offer any training resources for soft skills**. And only a small percentage had access to training on communication, teamwork, or conflict resolution.

## Top soft skills supported by in-house training resources

*Survey question: Does your organization currently offer any learning/training resources that would allow you to develop the following "non-technical" skills?*



Strengthen your soft skills with these related LinkedIn Learning courses:

[Communication Fundamentals](#)

[Managing Your Time](#)

[Leading and Working in Teams](#)

[Conflict Resolution Fundamentals](#)

[Managing Technical Projects](#)

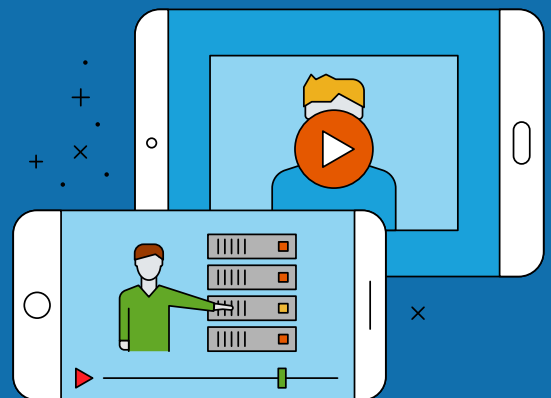


**Bonus resource:**

Check out **"!techskills for IT Professionals"** for insights into the top non-technical skills your peers are acquiring at each career stage.

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Training to stay  
ahead of the curve



## Embrace an always-be-learning mindset

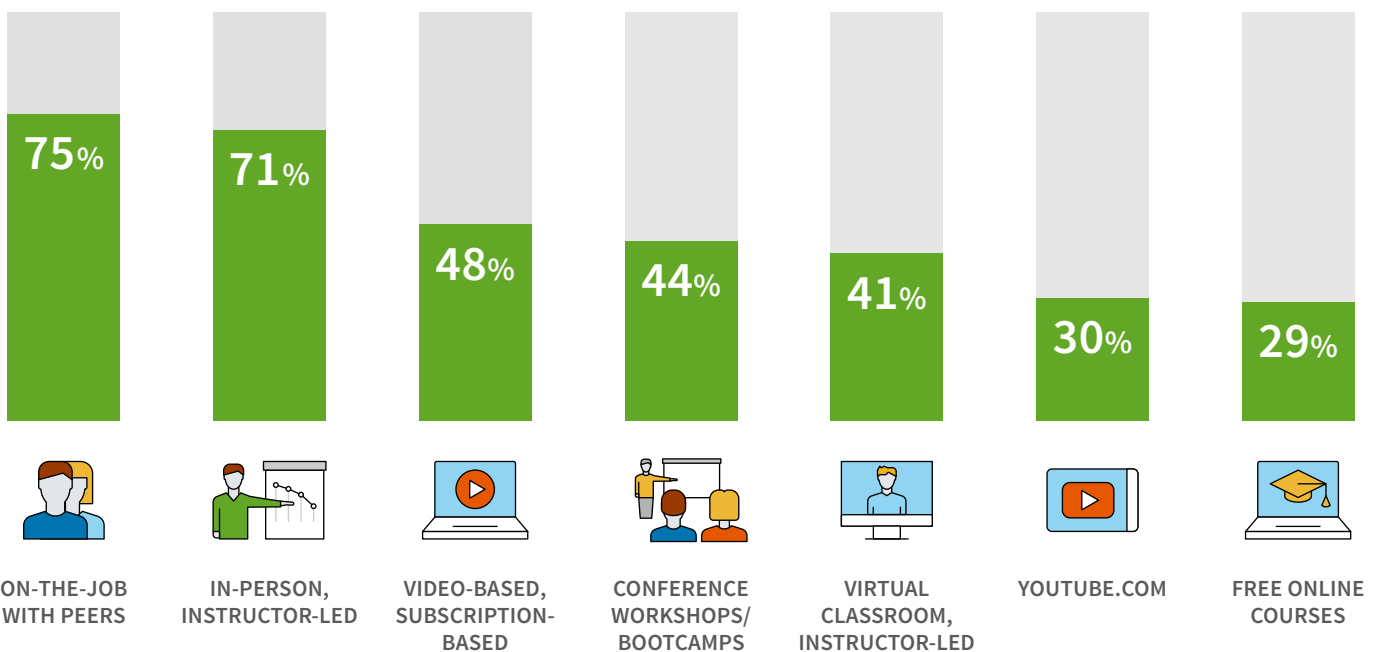
In many professions, skills improve with time and experience. In IT, this isn't always the case. While real-world experience can strengthen basic technical chops, ongoing learning is necessary to acquire newer, more specialized skills. Database software tools, network management, operating systems, programming languages—and emerging areas like machine learning and mobile development—are constantly evolving, and industry best practices change rapidly as tools and systems advance.

**No amount of experience can help IT pros sharpen skillsets they don't already have. As a result, prioritizing learning and training is critical for career advancement.**

The vast majority of Spiceworks survey respondents considered training to be a critical catalyst to career growth, and they assigned it more importance than even IT certifications. They identified on-the-job training that occurs in cooperation with their peers, as well as in-person and video-based learning, as the most valuable methods for acquiring new IT skills. More often than not in today's workplace, video-based learning supplements in-person or peer-to-peer learning. Plus, it helps employees retain information as well as access training on-demand when they need it in their jobs.

## Most valuable training methods for new skills

*Survey question: Which of the following training methods do you find most valuable for learning new IT skills?*



## The value of IT certifications

According to the survey results, career advancement is a common motivation among IT pros seeking certifications and participating in trainings. And IT pros described a desire to keep learning and become an expert in emerging fields as an added incentive for enrolling in training courses.

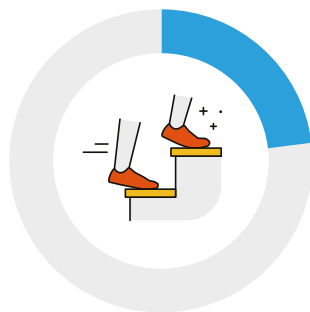
### Top reasons IT pros attend training

*Survey question: What motivates you most to take IT trainings?*



28%

LEARN SOMETHING NEW



23%

ADVANCE/DEVELOP THEIR CAREERS



23%

BECOME AN EXPERT

What's more, IT pros said IT certifications are more important in early career stages. **CompTIA** (61%) and Microsoft (53%) were their most commonly held/considered certifications, and there are specific training courses that can help IT pros prepare for these certifications. (Cisco, AWS, and Google were also top certifications held by the surveyed IT pros.)

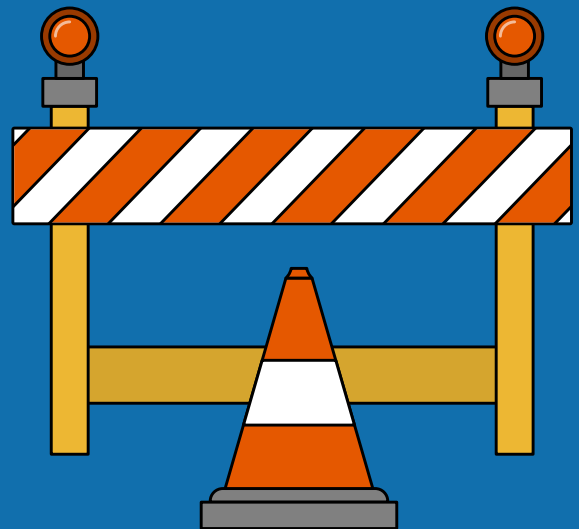


#### CompTIA Certification prep Learning Paths from LinkedIn Learning:

- [\*Become a CompTIA A+ Certified Technician\*](#)
- [\*Become a CompTIA Security+ Certified Professional\*](#)



Roadblocks  
to learning



## The impact of limited training opportunities

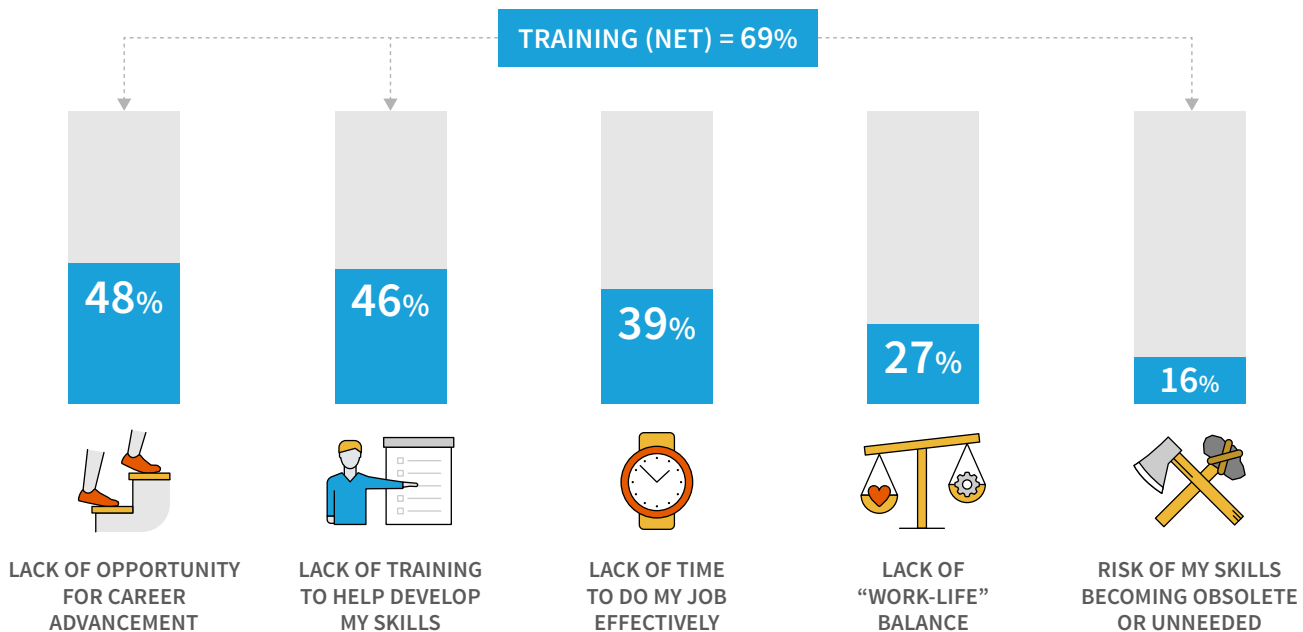
Keeping up with technology by taking courses or working toward certifications—while also honing soft skills—can be challenging for IT pros working in the trenches. Staying up to date requires time, effort, and money. This comes as many companies view providing tech employees with quality professional development and learning opportunities as an unwanted expense, not an investment.

**Most of the Spiceworks survey respondents (69%) cited a lack of overall training as the top challenge holding them back in their current jobs.**

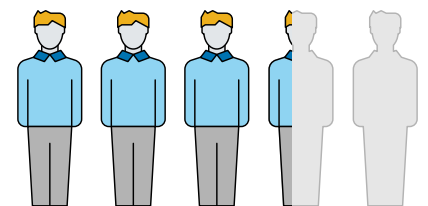
Because soft skills are often undervalued, there were fewer soft skills than hard skills training opportunities provided to IT pros.

## Top Challenges IT Pros Face in Their Current Jobs

*Survey question: What **challenges**, if any, have you experienced at your current job?*

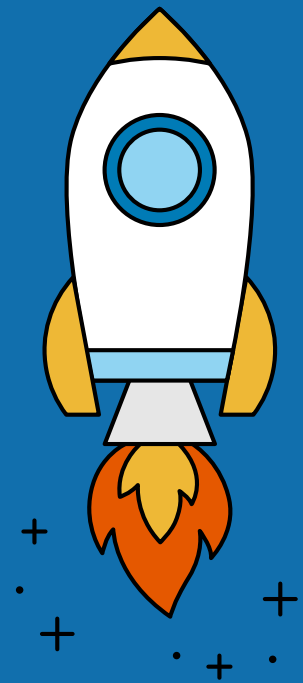


When asked which resources would be most helpful in increasing their job performance, **more than three out of five (64%) of respondents said their organizations don't offer enough helpful training resources.** This leaves IT pros with one option. They must take learning into their own hands.





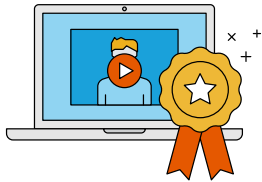
Taking action



## Unleash the power of online learning

The good news is that plenty of great online learning resources are available. Chief among them, **LinkedIn Learning** and **Lynda.com** are on-demand learning platforms that help IT pros and teams achieve more.

### Our newest platform LinkedIn Learning provides:



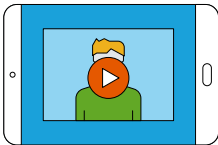
#### World-class content

The LinkedIn Learning video library features more than 10,000 on-demand, expert-led Lynda.com courses, including some offered free of charge or in multiple languages. These high-quality tutorials cover a vast range of business, creative, and technical topics, including leadership, design, and programming. Content is constantly updated; on average, 35 courses are added every week.



#### Data-driven personalization

Millions of professionals on the LinkedIn network provide unique insights into how jobs and industries evolve over time and help inform personalized LinkedIn Learning course recommendations designed to match career aspirations. An organization can use LinkedIn insights to customize multi-course Learning Paths, and LinkedIn analytics to measure learning effectiveness.



#### Anytime, anywhere convenience

LinkedIn Learning courses are broken into bite-size segments that can be viewed anytime, on any device, online or offline. Learning content is recommended throughout the LinkedIn.com experience, helping learners discover courses most relevant to meeting their goals.

### Try LinkedIn Learning

[Get started](#)



## About the Survey

LinkedIn commissioned Spiceworks to conduct a survey in January 2017. The survey addressed IT decision-makers in the U.S. to understand their current challenges related to learning and training, as well as their future needs and expectations. Results of the survey included responses from 198 participants from organizations of varying sizes across manufacturing, government, healthcare, education, and other industries.