



## Commentary: Redesigning Jobs in IT

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*According to new research from international recruitment consultancy, Robert Half UK (<https://roberthalf.co.uk>) one-in-three (29%) employers are currently redesigning roles in direct response to the impact of the pandemic as they look to build more agile, adaptable workforces moving forward.*

We surveyed more than 1,500 executives to explore which digital and technical capabilities and 'soft' skills are most in-demand as managers seek to get back on their feet and take advantage of growth opportunities in the 'new normal'.

### Focus on business management

In a world where remote working seems here to stay, it is perhaps no surprise that the top two in-demand skills are focused around IT security (32%) and IT management (30%), while financial management (25%) and business planning and analysis (21%) are also key.

These business management skills are being prioritized by employers as they look to ensure resilience in the case of a second wave, as well as to support new business strategies considering the evolving economic environment.

Companies within the UK are seeking to embrace change and build more agile, adaptable workforces, with Robert Half observing many businesses redesigning traditional job roles to meet current day demands.

HR, talent acquisition and office support roles are not only in higher demand at present, but have increased in importance given the support they provide companies going through business and digital transformations, as well as guiding predominantly remote workforces through new processes and functions.





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Digital expertise combined with human skills

Despite an increased focus on tech capabilities for specific roles, two fifths (41%) of executives believe that 'soft' skills will also be essential for dealing with the continued uncertainty associated with COVID-19.



The top in-demand 'soft' skills include creative thinking (38%) and agility (36%), highlighting highlighting the importance of innovative, flexible teams to help businesses recover post-lockdown, while effective communication (35%), strong leadership (33%) and strategic thinking (29%) are also in high demand.

Figure 1: The top 5 in-demand skills across key employment sectors

Technology & IT	Finance & Accounting	Office Administration
Project management (18%)	Business planning & analysis (21%)	HR/payroll support (21%)
Analytics (18%)	Accounting operations (AP, AR, GL) (20%)	Marketing & PR support (18%)
Business intelligence (16%)	Risk & compliance (17%)	General administration (15%)
Cloud technology (15%)	Tax & treasury (16%)	Language skills (15%)

Source: Robert Half

A significant proportion of businesses are also focusing on levelling up their digital capabilities post-lockdown. Two fifths (41%) of C-suite respondents said they were



fast-tracking digital transformation efforts over the remainder of the year, while a third (32%) will be prioritizing their e-commerce strategy.

Robert Half has seen a surge in demand for technology roles, including network architects and developers, as many companies upgrade or expand their IT infrastructure and online revenue capabilities in response to shifting consumer demands and remote working.

## Most In-demand Soft Skills Post-Lockdown

41% of executives surveyed believe that soft skills are essential for dealing with the continued stresses and uncertainties associated with COVID-19.

 **1**  
**Creative Thinking**  
38%

 **2**  
**Agility**  
36%

 **3**  
**Communication**  
35%

 **4**  
**Leadership**  
33%

 **5**  
**Strategic Thinking**  
29%

Source: Robert Half's 2020 Labour Market Study, which compiled data from 1,502 managerial staff across Germany, France, Belgium, the UK and Brazil. Survey period: July 2020. © 2020 Robert Half.

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Within finance and accounting, Robert Half has observed an increased focus on candidates with digital operations and data analytics experience, as well as a rise in demand for credit and cash control roles as businesses seek to automate and streamline their finance functions through cloud based systems.



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Similarly, within financial services, Robert Half has also seen greater prioritization of candidates with cloud computing and analytical skills, coupled with an increase in demand for payment and analyst roles.

### **In conclusion**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way many of us do business, both now and in the future. Remote working has enabled talent pools around the world to open up which, for some companies, means that existing employees with key skills can be redeployed in the short-term to deliver business-critical roles. For others, however, changing customer demands and new working patterns have meant skills gaps have suddenly appeared – for digital transformation and e-commerce, in particular.

Effective permanent, temporary, and interim hiring strategies can help bridge these gaps by upskilling teams with the required specialist competencies and behaviours needed. Now is the ideal time to redesign job roles, retrain current employees and consider new combinations of permanent, temporary and project-based staff in order to build a smart, flexible staffing plan to supercharge your post-COVID-19 recovery.