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Talent Trends in MediaTech

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theiamt.org/biu

About this report



Report findings are based on the online survey developed by IAMT in partnership with the Media Talent Manifesto to gather insights from media technology professionals on the current state of the MediaTech workforce and skills landscape. The objective was to better understand how talent needs are evolving across the industry, including the growing impact of artificial intelligence on MediaTech roles. The findings of this research were presented at the World Skills Café at IBC 2026.

SAMPLE & FIELDWORK

45 respondents

47% C-suite representation

DATA COLLECTION

June–August 2026

Online survey of media technology vendors, service providers and media organizations.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

80% based in Western Europe or North America

The remaining 20% broadens the geographic reach.



The mix provides strong coverage of established MediaTech hubs while retaining representation from other regions.

COMPANY SIZE

44% over 100 employees 31% under 5 employees

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

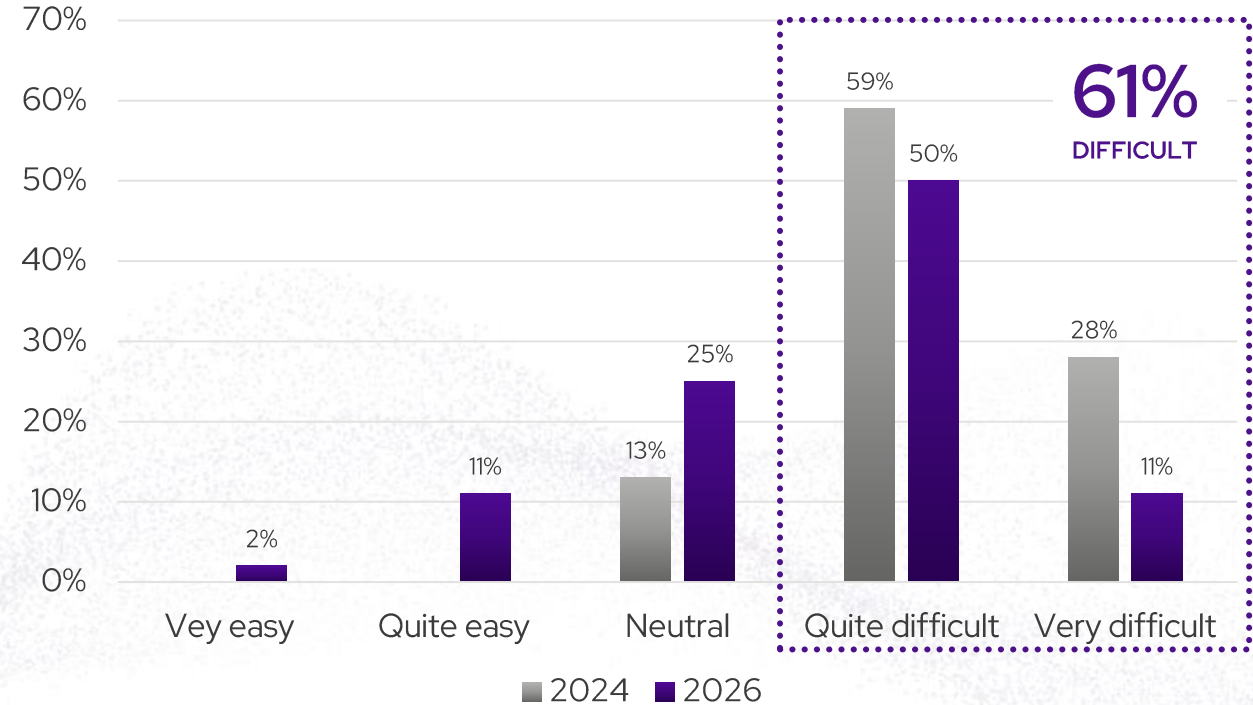
A sample spanning the MediaTech value chain



Media and production companies include broadcasters, streaming service providers, production and post-production houses.

Technical hiring is easing – but remains difficult

Ease of technical recruitment



The new IAMT survey follows a similar study conducted two years ago, focused on talent shortages in MediaTech, enabling a direct comparison with the 2024 findings while broadening the analysis to include AI, future skills, recruitment channels, and education.

Overall, the findings show that technical recruitment remains challenging, although the situation has improved. In 2026, 61% of respondents said that recruiting technical talent was difficult, meaning most organizations still face technical hiring challenges. This is down from 77% in 2024.

The key question is though not only whether the talent shortage has eased, but also how the types of talent organizations seek have changed.

Q. How do you rate the ease of recruiting candidates for technical roles in your company?
Base: 2026: all respondents, n=45; 2024: all respondents, n=39

AI/ML talent now tops the hiring challenge

AI has emerged as a major disruptor

In 2024, Software Engineering, Software Development, Integration, and System Architectures were the hardest skills to recruit. These capabilities remain in demand, but the center of the shortage has shifted.

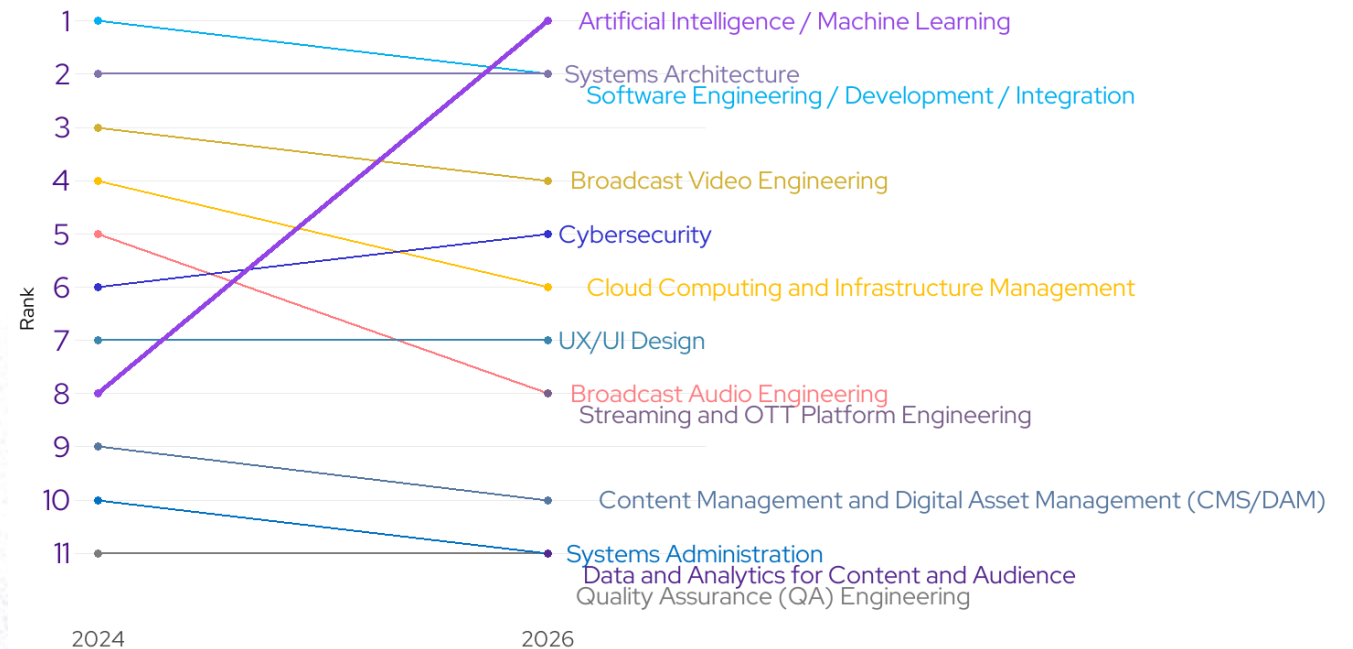
AI and machine learning have moved from near the bottom of the 2024 ranking to the top in 2026. Today, **30% of respondents identify AI & ML among the hardest skills to recruit.**

Cybersecurity has also risen in the ranking, while some media-specific technical skills have become less prominent.

MediaTech now competes across industries

The pattern points to a structural change: MediaTech employers are increasingly competing for broad, transferable capabilities rather than only for traditional industry specialists. For the industry, this widens the competitive arena. Media companies must attract talent sought across nearly every sector, particularly in AI & ML, cybersecurity, software engineering, and architecture. Therefore, talent strategies will need to reach beyond established MediaTech pipelines and place greater emphasis on skills development, cross-industry recruitment, and retention of scarce technical expertise.

The Talent Shortage Is Changing



Q. Which of the following skills are currently the most challenging to recruit for in the media and entertainment (M&E) industry? Base: respondents answering the question 2026, n=44; 2024 n=39

AI reshapes skills requirements – not technical demand

AI is expected to reshape workforce demand across the media and entertainment industry rather than simply reduce headcount. In the survey, 69% of respondents said AI will increase demand for new technical skills, including 19% who strongly agreed. However, 47% reported that their organizations do not currently have sufficient AI-

related talent, indicating an immediate capability gap. Views on entry-level employment were more divided: although most respondents disagreed with the statement that AI will reduce the need for entry-level roles, a significant minority – more than a third – agreed. The overall implication is that routine tasks may be automated while new

responsibilities emerge in system integration, oversight and operation. Workforce planning should therefore focus on redesigning roles, accelerating skills development and ensuring that early-career pathways evolve alongside AI-enabled workflows.

69%

AI will increase demand for new types of technical skills in the M&E industry

47%

Our organization lacks sufficient talent with AI-related skills

56% 36%

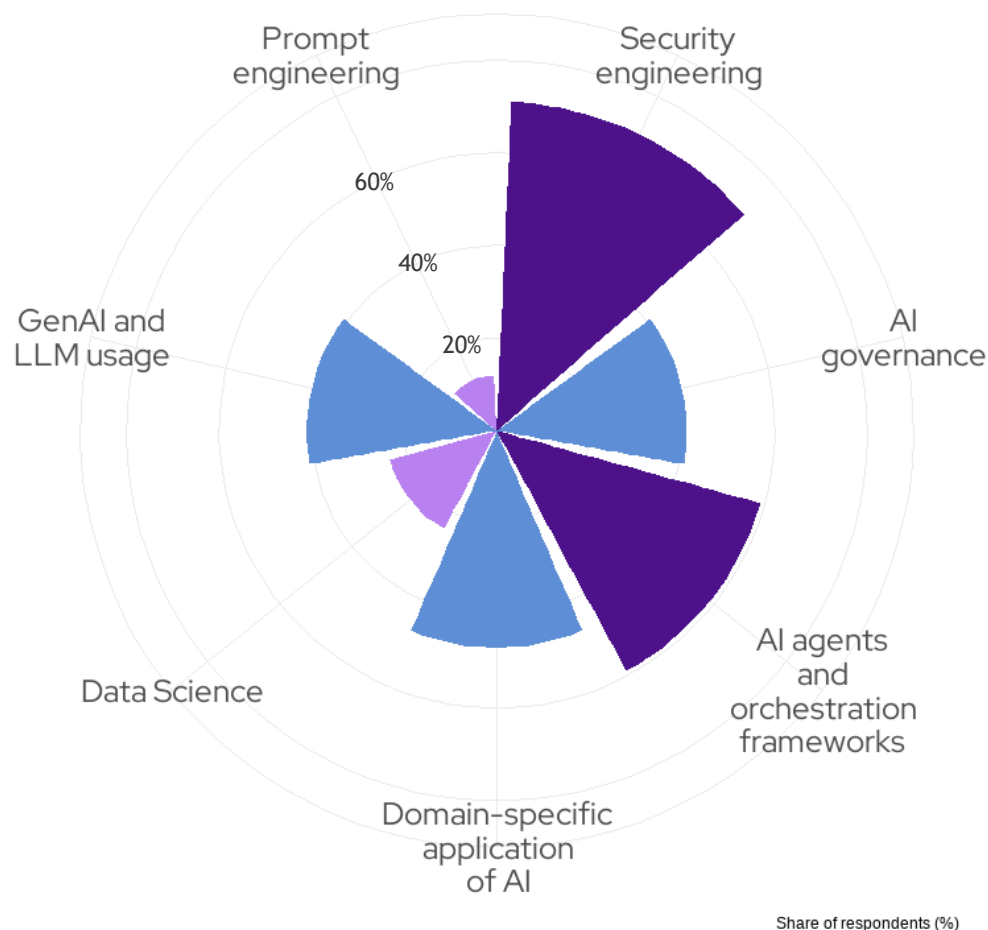
Disagree

Agree

AI is reducing the need for entry-level roles in the M&E industry

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: respondents answering the question, n=36

Security engineering and AI agents top demand



Q. Which AI-related skills does your organization lack the most? Base: respondents answering the question, n=44

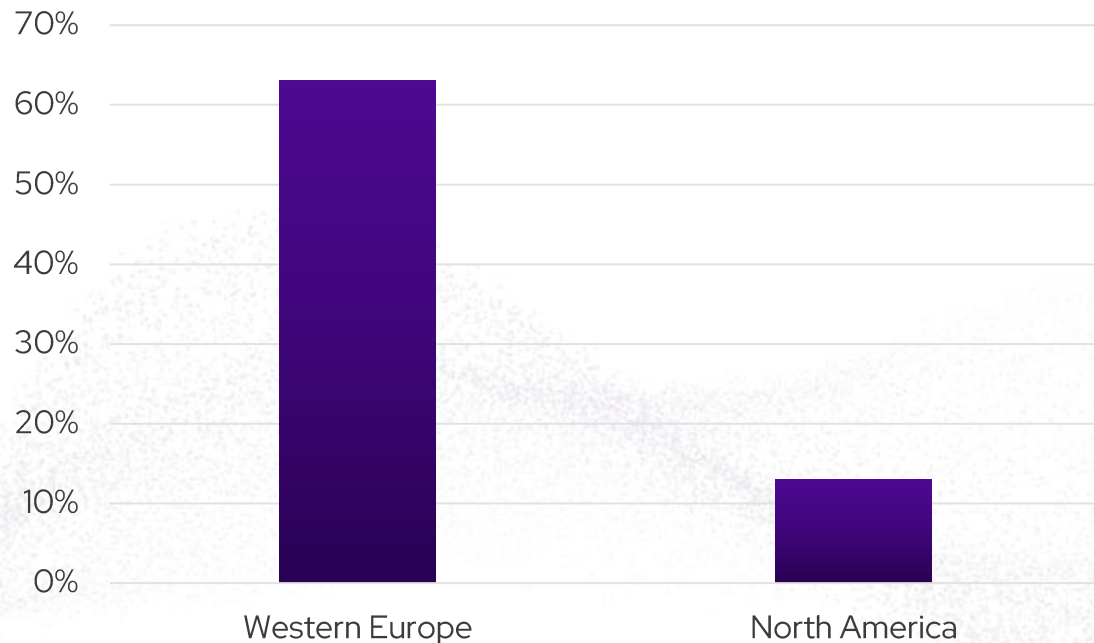
Demand for AI skills is becoming more specialized and can be viewed in three tiers.

- **TIER 1:** The highest-priority capabilities include security engineering and AI agents and orchestration frameworks, reflecting a shift from basic literacy toward the ability to build, integrate, secure and operate AI systems.
- **TIER 2:** The second tier combines domain-specific AI applications, generative AI and large language model use, and AI governance.
- **TIER 3:** The third tier includes data science and prompt engineering. These capabilities remain relevant, but routine elements are increasingly embedded within AI tools and may become more widely accessible.

The strongest long-term demand is therefore likely to be for professionals who combine AI expertise with deeper technical, commercial, security or media-domain knowledge. Organizations should align hiring and development plans to these integrated profiles rather than treating AI as a standalone discipline.

Universities & professional networks power hiring

Universities and higher education institutions as a recruitment channel



Q. What are your organization's main recruitment channels? Base: Western Europe, n=19; North America, n=15

AI talent comes from diverse channels

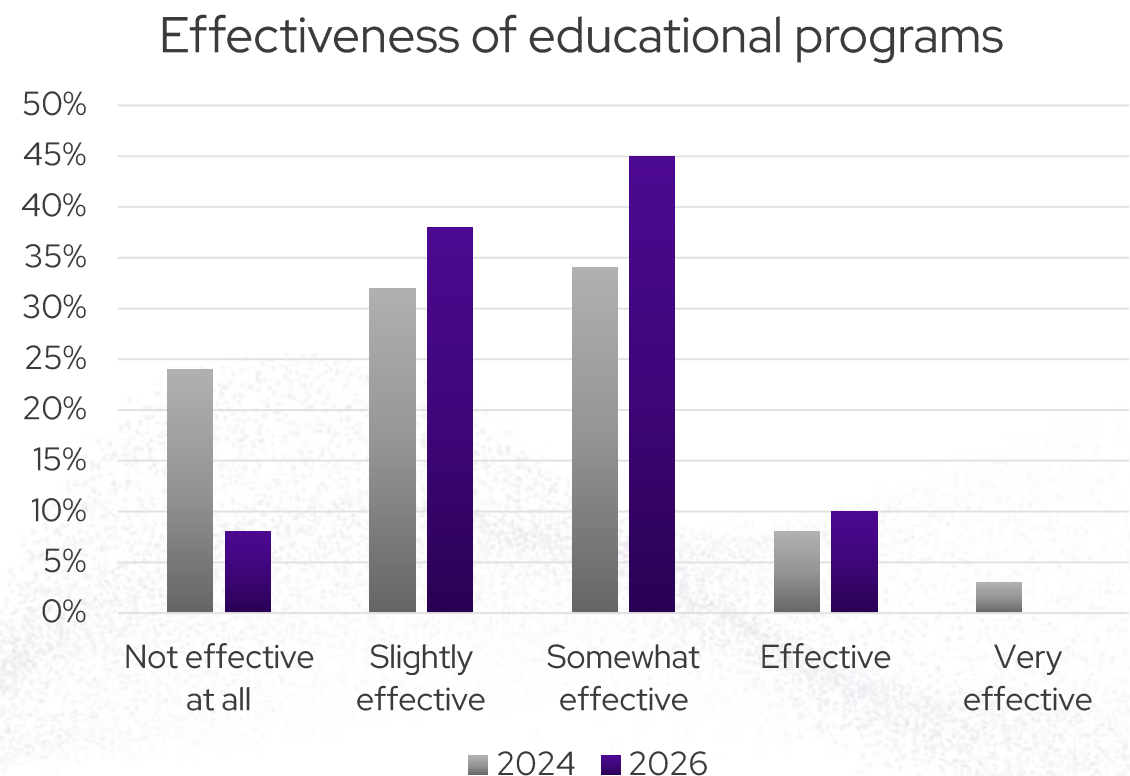
Organizations are using a diversified mix of early-career pipelines, professional sourcing and external talent markets to secure AI capability. Universities and higher-education institutions remain important recruitment channels, alongside professional associations, industry networks and alumni communities.

Western European leans more on universities

Regional differences are evident: respondents in Western Europe reported using more channels on average than those in North America, with universities playing a particularly prominent role.

Western European respondents selected approximately 3.6 recruitment channels on average, suggesting a broader and more education-linked sourcing model. This reliance on multiple channels reflects both the scarcity of qualified candidates and the absence of a single dependable pipeline. The strategic issue is therefore not only where to recruit, but whether available education and training routes can produce candidates with skills that remain aligned to rapidly changing operational requirements.

Are educational programs effective?



Q. How would you rate the effectiveness of current educational programs in preparing candidates for technical roles in the M&E industry? Base: respondents answering the question, 2026 n=40; 2024 n=38

Perceptions of education have barely improved since 2024

Comparison of the 2026 findings with the equivalent 2024 survey question shows limited improvement in perceptions of educational effectiveness. The proportion of respondents rating current programs as “not effective at all” has declined, indicating that the most negative assessments have softened. However, the share viewing programs as genuinely effective has not increased significantly. The result is a persistent gap between the technical capabilities employers require and the preparation they

believe education currently provides. This is a strategic workforce issue rather than a purely academic concern: weak alignment increases recruitment costs, lengthens onboarding and places greater pressure on employers to provide remedial training. Progress will require clearer competency frameworks, more frequent curriculum updates and stronger mechanisms for industry practitioners to shape course content, applied projects and assessment standards.



The technology is moving faster than the skills being taught.

Survey participant
MediaTech service provider, Australia

AI has become a major hiring challenge because the pace of technological development is materially faster than the cycle for designing and updating formal education. New tools, architectures and operating practices can emerge within months, while academic programs may require years to design, approve, implement and revise. This structural mismatch makes it difficult for curricula to remain fully aligned with current industry needs, even when institutions are responsive. Employers therefore cannot rely on degree programs alone to supply job-ready capability. A more adaptive model is required, combining foundational education with modular training,

employer-led projects, work placements and continuous professional development. Closer collaboration between industry and education providers can improve visibility of emerging requirements and shorten the time between identifying a skills need and delivering relevant learning opportunities.

Leading educational institutions in MediaTech

When asked to name leading educational institutions in media technology, respondents did not converge on a clear set of leaders. Four in ten respondents (40%) stated that none of the universities they considered were leading or particularly well regarded in the field. Among those who did name institutions, three universities were selected somewhat more often than others, but responses were spread relatively evenly across the list.

This pattern suggests that organizations lack a reliable reference point for where to find the talent they need. The challenge is therefore not only a shortage of people, but also a shortage of clearly identifiable, reliable talent pipelines.

For employers, this makes talent acquisition more fragmented and increases the effort required to identify and build relationships with promising graduates. It also highlights an opportunity for industry and educational institutions to strengthen partnerships and create clearer pathways from education into media technology careers.



Q. Which universities do you consider leading or well-regarded in media technology? Base: respondents answering the question, n=39.

Platform skills will shape future demand

Future hiring demand spans three broad capability tiers

The first centers on workflow, infrastructure, data and security, showing that organizations need professionals who can support the full technical environment behind increasingly complex media operations.

The second combines technical competence with adaptable ways of working. Hybrid profiles are becoming especially valuable, with employers seeking people who can connect creativity, content, audiences and production workflows with strong technical knowledge. This aligns with the broader market trend toward

blended rather than narrowly defined roles.

The third tier comprises specialized areas such as streaming and OTT platform engineering, personalization, audience-centric technology and immersive experiences. These domains remain strategically important, but demand is concentrated in particular segments.

Overall, the broadest opportunity is for talent that combines technical depth, adaptability and practical understanding of the media business.

Tier 1

**Cross platform & agile workflows;
Cloud & infrastructure for media;
Data, analytics & content intelligence;
Cybersecurity & IP protection.**

Tier 2

**AI augmented creativity;
Creative technical hybrids;
Behavioral & soft skill traits.**

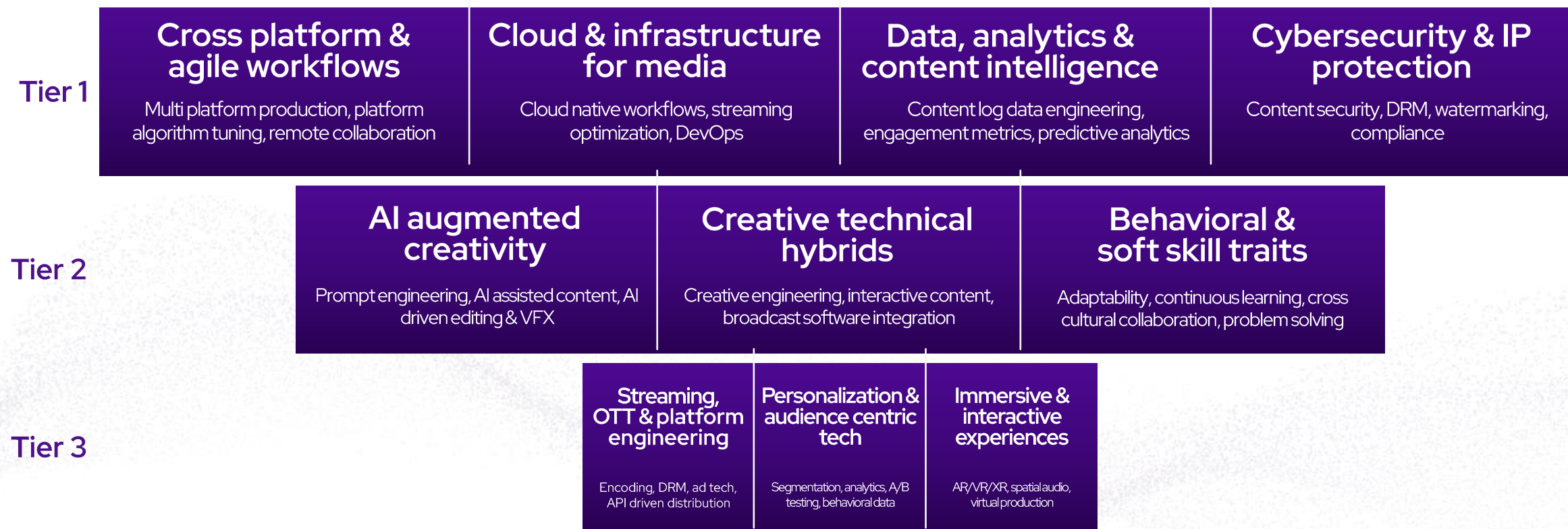
Tier 3

**OTT and streaming;
Personalization,
Immersive tech.**

Q. Over the next 2–3 years, which of the following skill areas will be most important for the M&E industry?

Platform skills will shape future demand

Most Important Future Skill Areas



Q. Over the next 2–3 years, which of the following skill areas will be most important for the M&E industry? Base: respondents answering the question, n=36

Note: The length of the bar represents the average percentage of respondents for the skills in each tier.

AI evolves skillsets, but does not replace talent

Survey feedback suggests that AI should be treated as both an opportunity and a source of operational risk, but not as a substitute for the workforce. AI can accelerate analysis, automate repetitive activity and extend technical capacity; however, effective deployment still depends on people who understand business objectives, media workflows, content, audiences, governance and quality. The key workforce question is therefore how roles should evolve, not whether employees remain necessary. Organizations that view AI primarily as a cost-reduction mechanism may underinvest in the human judgment and domain expertise required to generate value safely. A more sustainable approach is to combine automation

with deliberate capability building, clear accountability and redesigned workflows. The future of media technology will be AI-powered, but competitive advantage will continue to depend on skilled people who can direct, evaluate and improve those systems.



AI comes with fantastic opportunities and pitfalls. AI does NOT get rid of the needs for having employees, but AI will be everything.

Survey participant
Broadcaster, Western Europe

The path forward

The industry should pursue three coordinated actions.

First, employers should invest in upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce rather than treating technological change primarily as a replacement exercise. Current employees already hold valuable knowledge of workflows, customers, content and business models; targeted technical development can extend that expertise into AI-enabled operations.

Second, organizations should build stronger partnerships with universities and training providers, helping them identify emerging capabilities and co-create agile, AI-focused curricula.

Third, the industry should establish clearer entry routes through internships, graduate programs, apprenticeships and other work-based pathways that connect education with practical requirements.

These measures should be supported by sustained collaboration across employers, educators and professional bodies. The objective is an integrated talent ecosystem able to adapt at a pace closer to that of technological change.

1

Invest in the existing workforce

2

Build stronger partnerships with education

3

Create clearer pathways into emerging skills

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