Autodesk's 3rd Annual State of Design & Make Report Reveals AI Skills are Top Hiring Priority as Leaders Face Talent Shortages

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Nearly 6,000 global industry leaders, futurists, and experts across Design and Make industries share insights and solutions in third annual survey

SAN FRANCISCO, April 16, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- **Autodesk, Inc. (NASDAQ: ADSK)** released the 2025 *State of Design & Make* report today, exploring sentiments from leaders across Design and Make industries on managing cost control, embracing emerging technologies, and addressing the talent and skills gaps. Despite experiencing geopolitical and economic uncertainty, the majority of leaders continue to invest in AI and technology advancement, acquisitions, and sustainability across the board. Although AI and tech investments have slowed post-2024 hype, early adopters are beginning to benefit and refine their strategies.



"The accelerating pace of innovation and demand for sustainability is reshaping skill requirements across the industries we serve. This creates both a challenge and a massive opportunity for Design and Make leaders," said **Andrew Anagnost, President and CEO, Autodesk**. "This year's findings are clear - companies that invest in bridging the skills gap will be more resilient and better positioned to leverage emerging technologies."

Design and Make industries – architecture, engineering, construction, and operations; design and manufacturing; and media and entertainment – employ nearly 300 million people worldwide* and by 2027 will represent $30 trillion in value globally**. Autodesk's annual report is the only global study that surveys leaders across these collective industries – highlighting the issues that unite them and distinguishing the challenges unique to each sector.

From Hype to Hard Truths: Leaders Grapple with Challenges of Implementing AI
While AI adoption is accelerating, enthusiasm is cooling as companies confront the challenges of implementation – namely finding the trained talent to advance this work. Companies who are investing in technology, including AI are seeing early productivity gains, while those who are less tech-advanced are reassessing their AI strategies or remain in the early adoption stages. Trust in AI has declined, and leaders are becoming more cautious about its disruptive potential.

- Nearly half (48%) of survey respondents say AI will destabilize their industry, a seven-point increase from last year.
- 65% of respondents say they trust AI in their field, reflecting an 11-point decline.
- Confidence in AI decision-making has also dropped, with 69% of professionals expressing confidence in their company's AI choices, down nine points.

Despite these concerns, AI investment will be a top priority. Business leaders at tech-advanced companies in Design and Make are still feeling bullish as they identify opportunity and increase investment in training. Tech-advanced companies continue to lead in AI adoption and are seeing benefits in hiring, productivity, and innovation from digital transformation efforts.

- More than 2 in 3 leaders plan to increase AI investments.
- Only 40% of professionals report that their companies are approaching or have achieved their AI goals, highlighting a longer road ahead.

The AI Boom Is Here, But the Workforce Isn't Ready: Leaders Face Massive Skills Crisis
The talent crunch continues to impact business growth. Leaders are struggling to find employees with the right technical skills while also lacking the resources to build effective internal training programs. This widening skills gap is pushing leaders to rethink their workforce strategies.

- 46% say AI skills will be a top hiring priority over the next three years.

- 58% of professionals report that a lack of access to skilled talent is a barrier to growth, a 15-point increase from last year.
- 61% say new employees with the right technical skills are difficult to find, up 16 points from 2024.

While companies are acknowledging the importance of upskilling, many are struggling to address these challenges with on-the-job training and continuous learning that could help their employees – and their businesses – keep up with the rapid pace of transformation.

- Nearly half (48%) of professionals say their organizations lack the resources to design internal training programs — a 10-point increase from last year.
- 77% of tech-advanced companies plan to increase investments in digital training, compared to **59%** of less tech-advanced companies.

The next generation must master AI skills to thrive, working alongside technology rather than against it. Industry leaders must bridge the gap between education and the demands of an AI-driven workforce by democratizing access to technology, designing project-based learning environments that reflect the workplace, and ultimately connect young people to the most in-demand jobs opportunities across sectors.

Green Means Growth: Sustainability Continues to Influence Retention and Revenue Gains
Sustainability is emerging as a key differentiator for companies seeking to drive growth, build resilience, and attract top talent. As businesses navigate economic pressures and shifting regulations, sustainability is becoming a necessity in the global marketplace for long-term success. Organizations with advanced technology adoption are leading the way, using sustainability as a competitive advantage.

- 75% of professionals at tech-advanced companies say sustainability efforts are helping attract and retain talent, compared to 54% at less tech-advanced companies.
- Business leaders are increasingly recognizing the financial benefits of sustainability, with 72% believing it can generate more than 5% of their annual revenue.
- AI continues to play a pivotal role in sustainability efforts, with 39% of companies using AI to be more sustainable, up from 34% in 2024.

As the race to 2030 accelerates, companies are aligning their technology investments with sustainability goals, turning their environmental commitments into competitive advantages.

For the third year in a row, leveraging data and advanced technology has helped Design and Make companies navigate disruption and uncover new opportunities. In addition to improvements in customer satisfaction, productivity, and innovation, leaders also report gains in company reputation (72%), product and service expansion (68%), and enhanced data exchange (67%). The takeaway is clear: companies investing in modernization are seeing meaningful results.

Complete findings of the 2025 *State of Design & Make* report can be found on Autodesk.com, and press assets can be found here.

Sources:
**World Economic Forum*
***Statista*, *Statista*, *Oxford Economics & PWC*

About the State of Design & Make Report: The *State of Design & Make* report is a global, annual, longitudinal study for leaders who design and make places, objects, and experiences. For the *2025 State of Design & Make* edition, Autodesk surveyed and interviewed 5,594 industry leaders, futurists, and experts across Design and Make industries: architecture, engineering, construction, and operations (AECO); design and manufacturing (D&M); and media and entertainment (M&E). Survey data has been broken down by global region: Asia-Pacific (APAC); Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); and the Americas (AMER). This is the third longitudinal year of this report series with data comparisons from the previous two reports.

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