



# Bridging the Skills Gap in the Construction Industry: Perspectives from Workers and Employers

The contracting industry stands at a crossroads: growing demand and evolving technologies have created a widening gap between the skills that employers seek and the capabilities that workers bring to the job. Contractor Training Center (CTC), a leading resource for contractor licensing and training, conducted a national survey in January-February 2025 to better understand this divide from both the worker and employer perspectives.

In this whitepaper, we'll present key findings from our 2025 study, additional data from authoritative sources, and propose strategic solutions for bridging these gaps—empowering contractors and employers alike to thrive in a changing market.

# Executive Summary

Our research reveals a consistent mismatch between contractor self-perception and employer expectations. While contractors report high confidence in their skills, hiring managers often see significant deficiencies, particularly in soft skills and technical capabilities.

## Key takeaways:

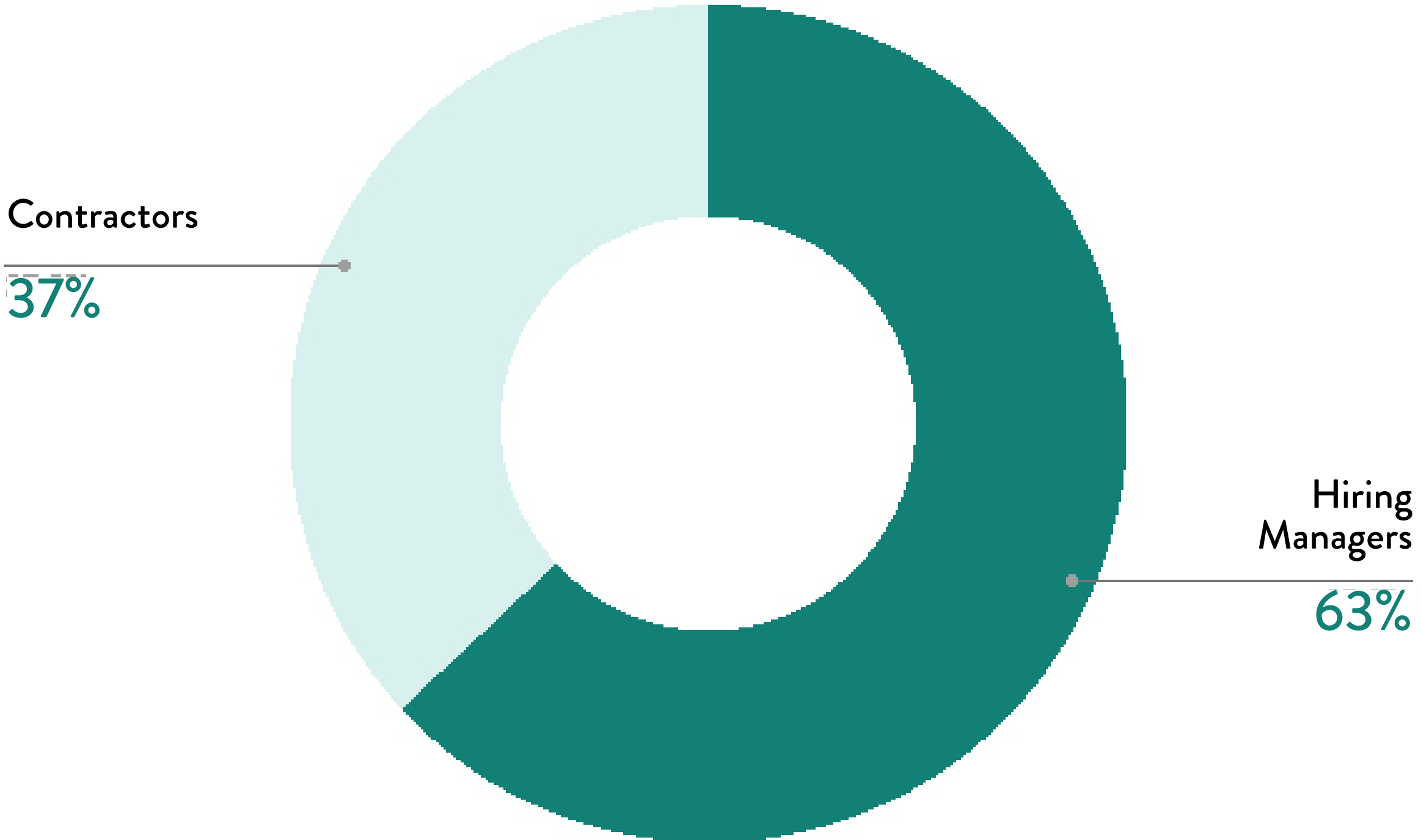
- 76% of contractors feel confident in meeting job demands, but only 51% of hiring managers share that confidence in their employees.
- 80% of contractors say their training prepared them well, versus 68% of employers who agree.
- Time and cost remain the top barriers to continuing education.
- Both groups identify project management, communication, and tech skills as top priorities for career growth.

These findings point to a critical need for affordable, flexible, and targeted upskilling pathways.

# Methodology

The survey ran from Jan. 13-Feb. 11, 2025, and received 276 completed responses—a 72% completion rate. Respondents included both contractors and hiring managers across specialties, license types, demographics, and company sizes.

Results were segmented by key subgroups, such as experience level, education, gender, and company size, and are only included where statistically significant.



**Sample Size: 276 completed the survey**

- 1% response rate
- 72% completion rate
- Almost all (over 90%) work for non-union
- 63% were hiring managers and 37% were contractors



# 3 Universal Challenges Facing Today's Construction Workforce

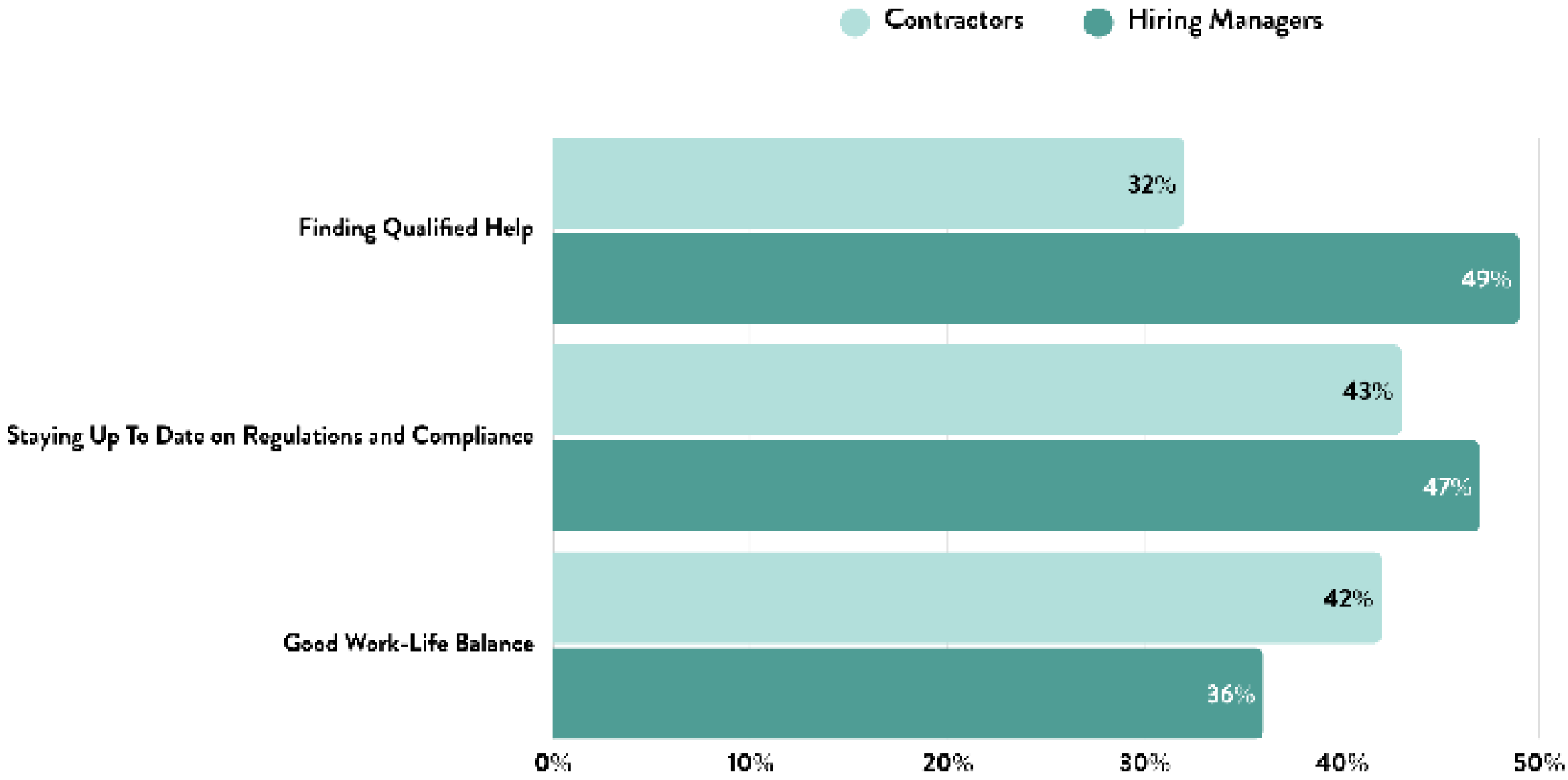
Both contractors and employers cited similar hurdles:

- Staying up to date on regulations and compliance
- Finding qualified help
- Maintaining work-life balance

Regulatory complexity continues to be a top concern for both groups, particularly as local and federal requirements evolve rapidly. Contractors must juggle licensing changes, safety codes, and documentation standards, while employers face heightened liability and compliance oversight. For smaller businesses, keeping pace with shifting regulations without dedicated administrative support can be especially burdensome.

Finding qualified help remains a persistent and urgent issue. The construction labor shortage is well-documented; according to the Associated Builders and Contractors, the industry needed over half a million additional workers in 2024 to meet demand. Employers struggle to find workers with the right blend of technical knowledge, professionalism, and dependability. Contractors, especially those newer to the field, report challenges accessing clear training pathways or gaining hands-on experience.

Top Construction Industry Challenges: Hiring Managers vs. Contractors



*While the survey found a number of areas where hiring managers and contractors share differing beliefs, they are aligned when it comes to the challenges they face in the industry. Each having the same top 3 concerns as this chart notes.*

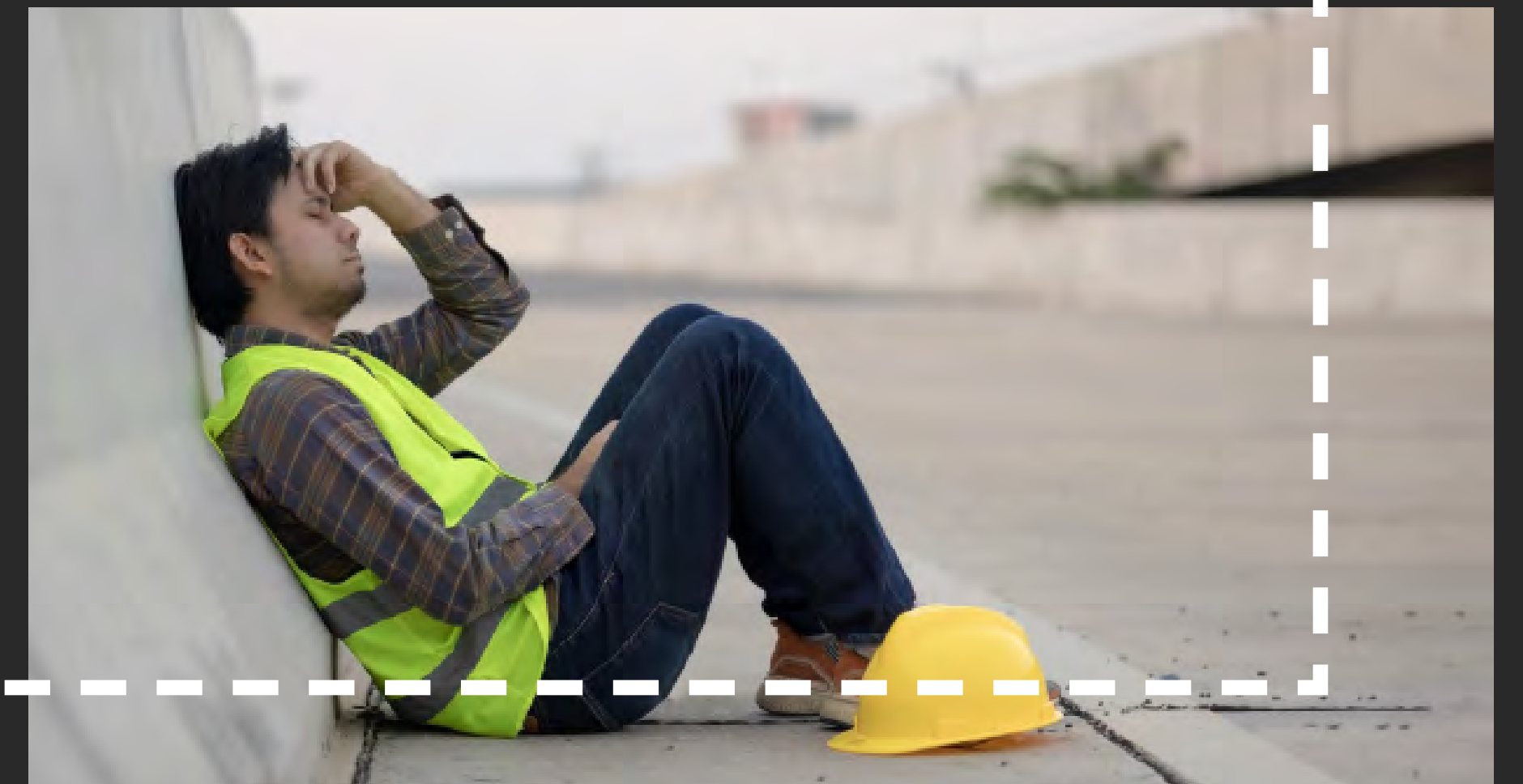


### 3 Universal Challenges Facing Today's Construction Workforce

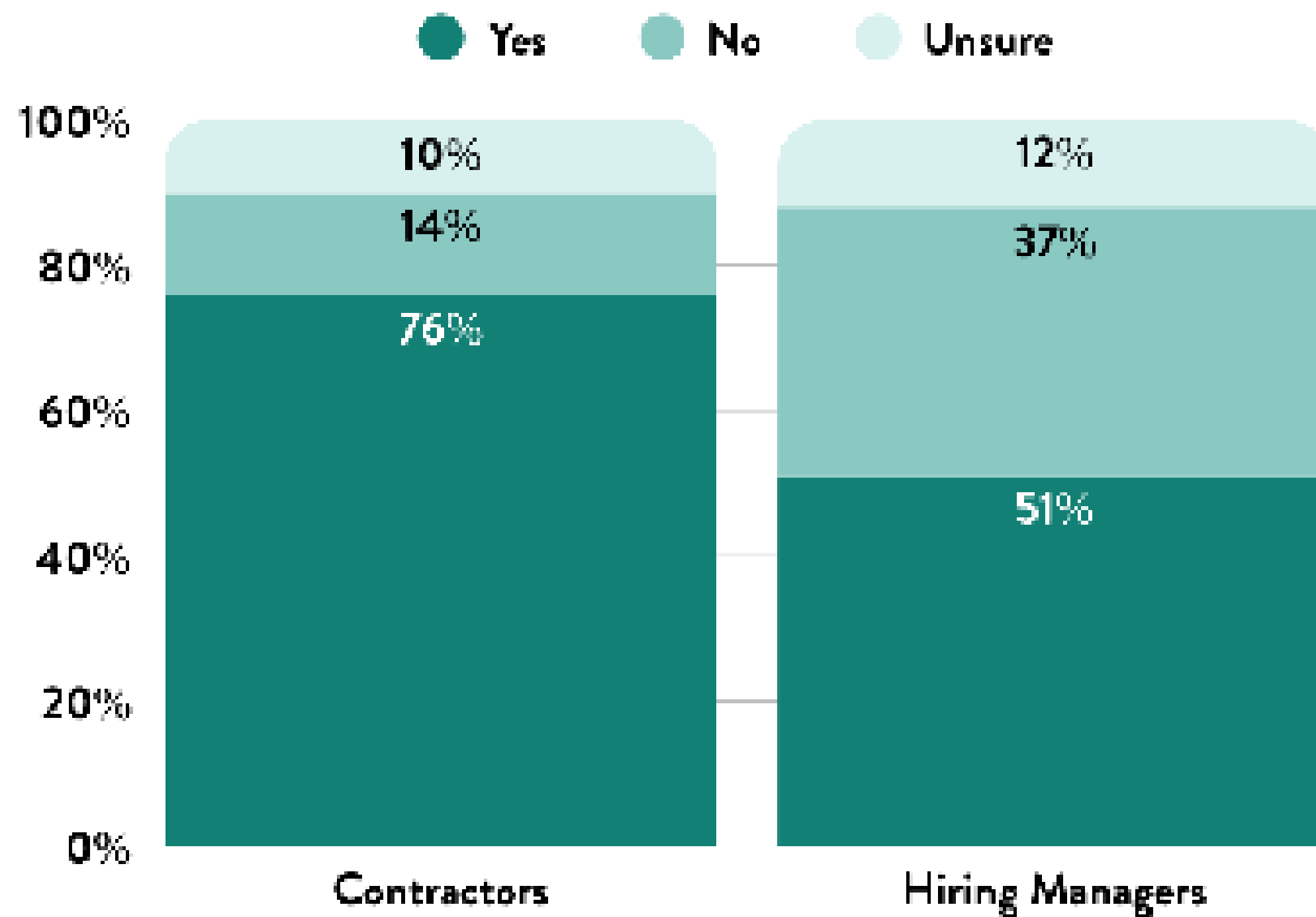
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Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is increasingly difficult across roles. Contractors cite long hours, unpredictable job schedules, and travel requirements as key contributors to burnout. Employers, meanwhile, face staffing gaps that stretch their teams thin and increase operational stress. The industry's traditional culture of "grind and hustle" is being reevaluated as both contractors and managers seek sustainable career longevity.

Despite these shared concerns, their perspectives diverge significantly when it comes to evaluating worker readiness.



## Skill Gaps: Are You or Your Employees Fully Prepared?



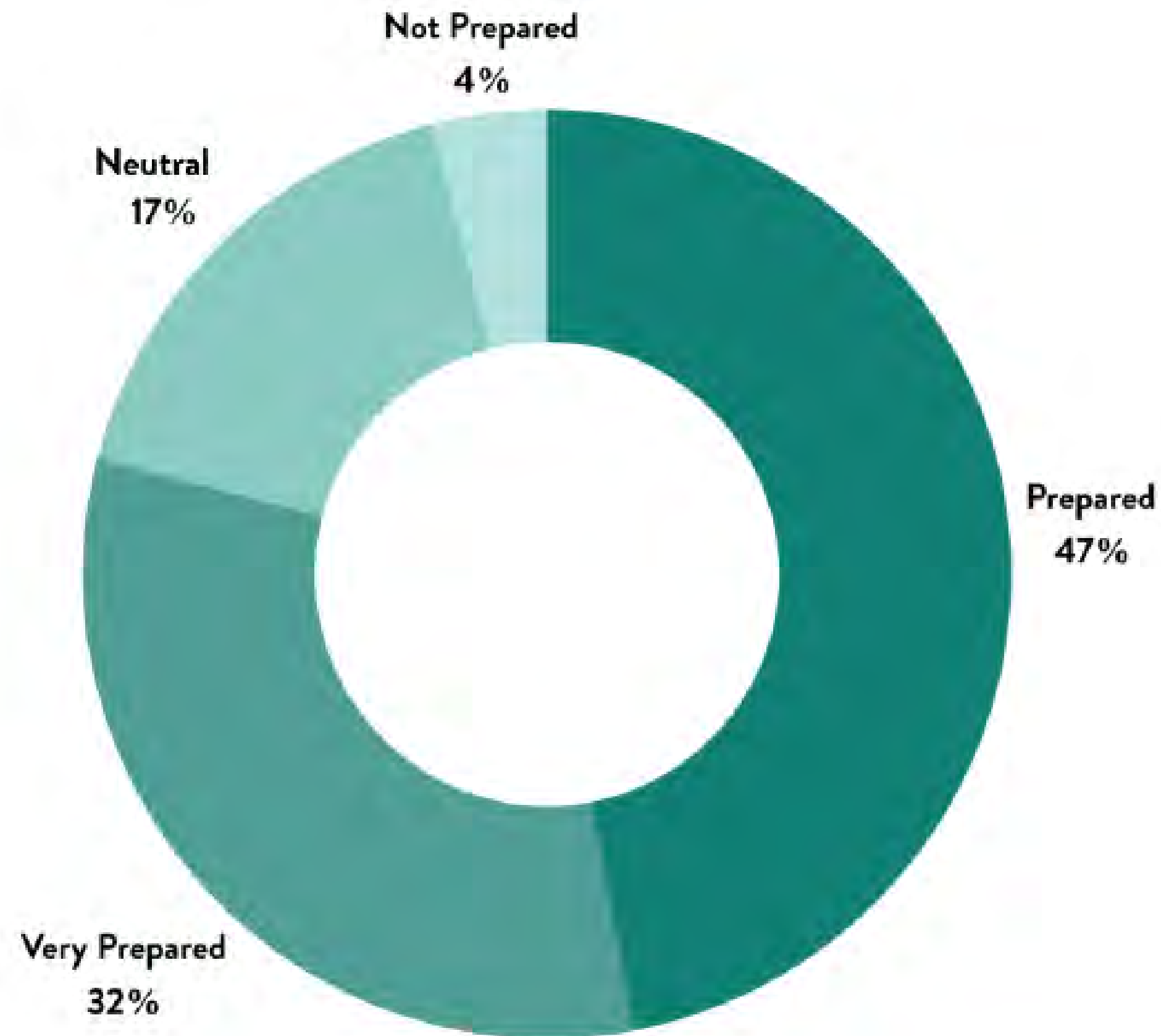
Contractors are notably more confident in their ability to meet job demands with their current skill set compared to hiring managers. Over three-quarters of contractors feel fully equipped, while only about half of hiring managers share the same confidence.

## The Readiness Divide: How Workers and Employers See Skills Differently

When asked to describe the on-the-job skills or qualifications that were lacking, we found a disparity between hiring managers and workers. 76% of contractors feel they have all the necessary skills to meet the demands of their job, yet only 51% of hiring managers believe their employees carry all the necessary skills.



## How Prepared Do You Feel for the Demands of Your Job Based on Your Training?



*While 79% of contractors believe their training and education adequately prepared them for the demands of their work, only 68% of hiring managers share the same confidence in their employees' preparedness.*

### The Readiness Divide: How Workers and Employers See Skills Differently

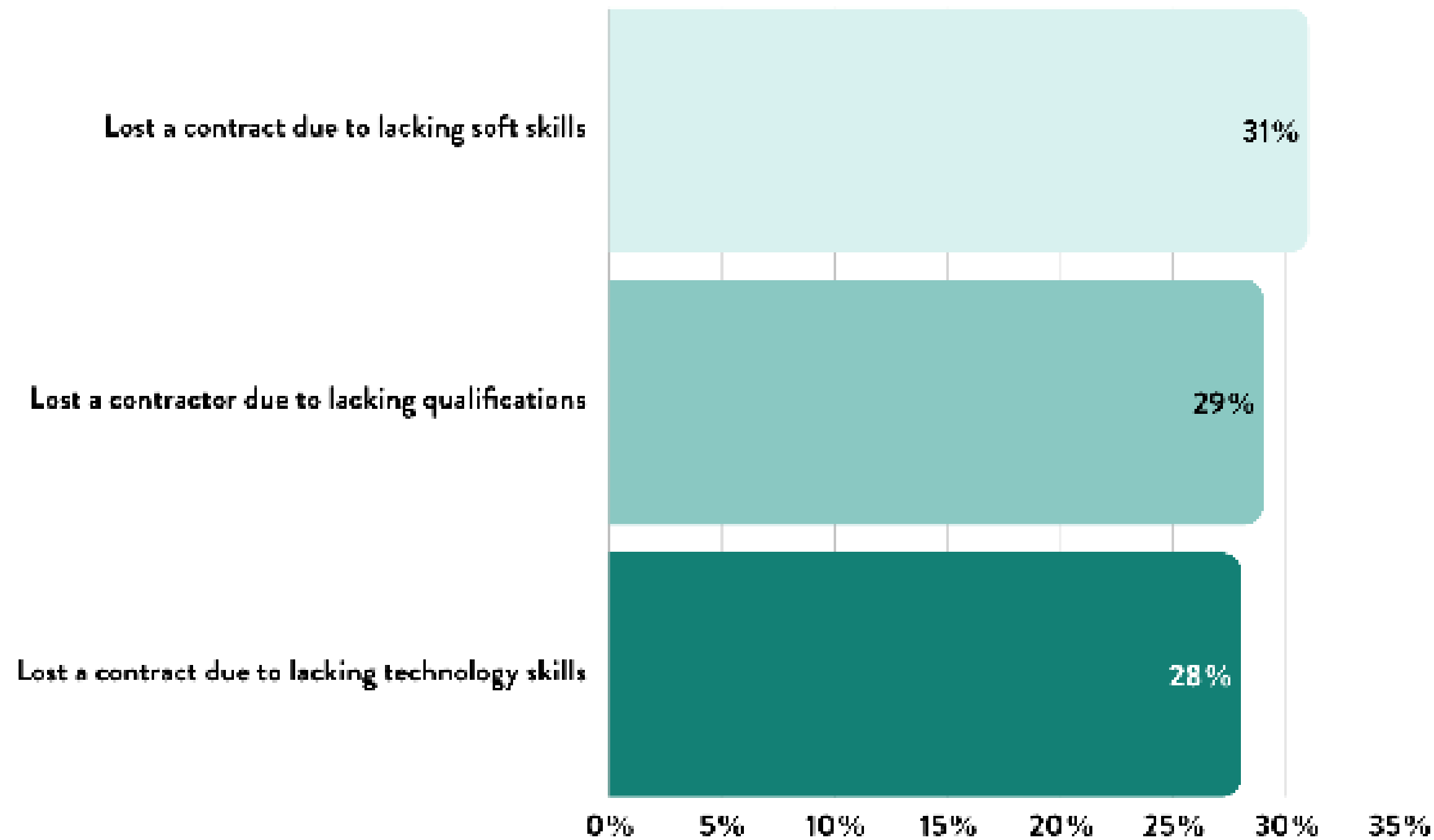
Hiring managers found that “communication and tracking items that are pending [was lacking].” They also pointed to employees struggling with time management. “They take a long time to complete tasks” and “they can’t meet the schedule on time.” One even noted that “new workers lack the knowledge and soft skills.”

However, contractors tend to view themselves as competent and well-prepared:

- 82% feel confident facing industry changes.
- 79% feel prepared or well prepared for their roles.
- 78% rate their communication skills as advanced or expert.



## Do you believe the following statements apply to your employees?



*Nearly 1/3 of hiring managers perceive their employees lack the necessary qualifications, soft skills, and technology knowledge to succeed on some jobs. And it's costing them contracts and revenue.*

In contrast, hiring managers are more skeptical:

- Only 69% believe employees are ready for industry shifts.
- Just 45% think their team excels at communication.
- A third report lost opportunities due to employees' soft skill deficiencies.





# When comparing contractors and hiring managers, these are the top three gaps that emerged from our research:

## Soft Skills

Hiring managers consistently cite communication, time management, and customer interaction as lacking among their workforces. While contractors often overrate their own capabilities, hiring managers see tangible business impacts from these deficiencies, such as lost bids, delayed projects, or misaligned expectations.

## Technical Proficiency with Software

Tools like Procore, Bluebeam, and construction management apps are critical to modern workflows. Yet, many contractors—especially those with fewer formal training hours—lack the fluency to use these tools effectively. Employers note that gaps in estimating and project tracking tools create friction in operations and reduce productivity.

## Preparedness for Industry Change

As new technologies and regulatory shifts accelerate, contractors must be able to adapt. While 82% of contractors feel confident in their adaptability, only 69% of hiring managers believe their teams are ready. This suggests an overconfidence gap in which workers underestimate the pace or complexity of change coming to the industry.

## The Readiness Divide: How Workers and Employers See Skills Differently

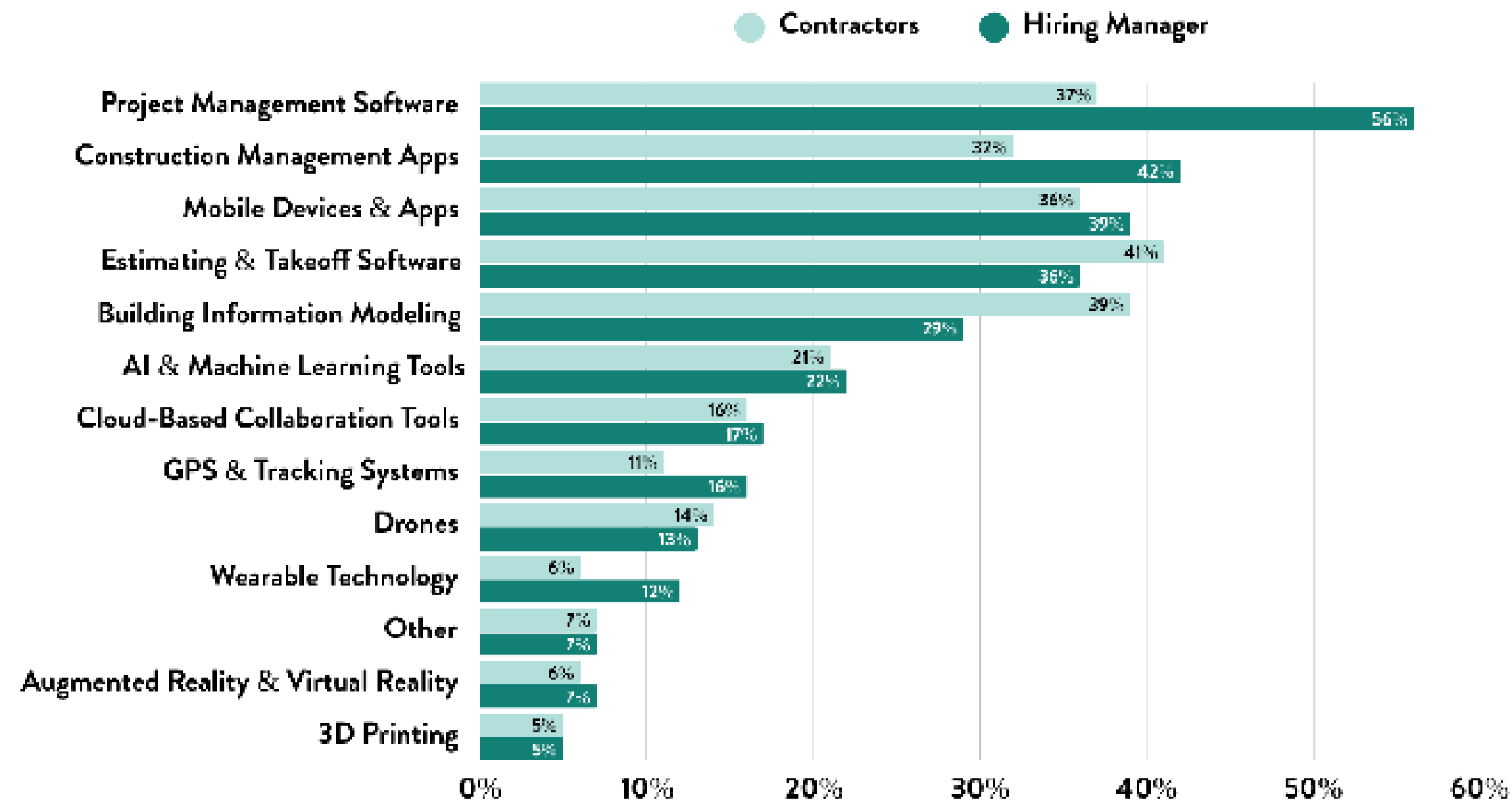
This misalignment may reflect different benchmarks: contractors compare themselves to peers; employers compare them to evolving business needs.

Notably, project management emerged as a central theme—both as a skill in demand and as a gateway to business growth. Contractors who lack confidence or capability in project management may miss opportunities to scale their operations, lead teams efficiently, or take on higher-value contracts. Hiring managers echoed this concern, often citing poor project oversight, missed deadlines, or weak coordination as reasons employees failed to win or retain jobs. As more contractors seek to build sustainable businesses, strengthening their project management skills becomes essential to unlocking their growth potential.



# What the Industry Needs Now: High-Demand Skills for the Future

## Technology Skills Gaps: What Contractors Want vs. What Hiring Managers Expect



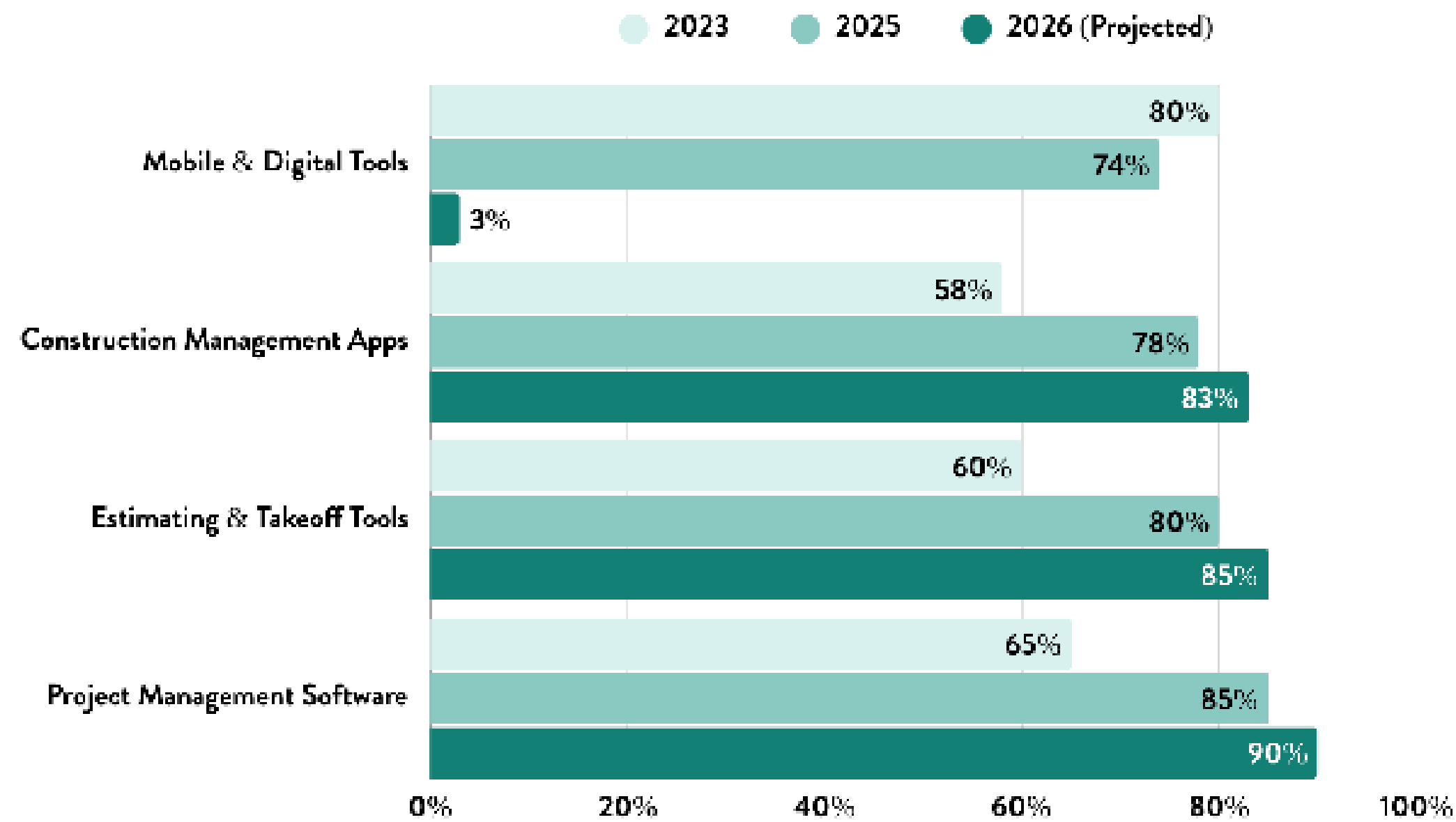
*Both contractors and hiring managers agree that project management software, construction management, and mobile apps are key skills for future success. However, hiring managers are notably more likely than contractors to believe their employees need to improve in project management software to advance in their careers.*

While both groups agree on the most critical future skills, employers are more likely to cite a need for improvement:

- Project management (especially software like Procore or Buildertrend)
- Estimating and takeoff software (e.g., PlanSwift, Bluebeam)
- Construction management apps
- Mobile tools and digital documentation



## Rising Demand for Digital Skills in Construction (2023 - 2026)



Sources: CTC Skills Gap 2025 Survey; Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), 2024 Workforce Survey; Autodesk + Associated Schools of Construction (ASC), 2023; World Economic Forum (WEF), Future of Jobs Report 2023; McKinsey Global Institute, 2022

### What the Industry Needs Now: High-Demand Skills for the Future

These findings are echoed in national workforce reports. According to the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) 2024 Workforce Survey, more than 85% of contractors reported difficulty in finding workers with adequate technology skills. Moreover, a 2023 report from Autodesk and the Associated Schools of Construction found that digital fluency—especially in tools used for scheduling, takeoff, and project management—was among the top five competencies employers sought when hiring.

The World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2023 also identifies “technology use, monitoring, and control” as a top 10 growing skill set across all industries, including construction. This underscores the importance of integrating construction software into training programs at all levels.



### What the Industry Needs Now: High-Demand Skills for the Future

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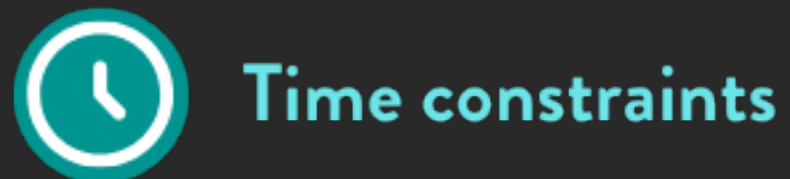
Mobile proficiency is particularly valuable on today's job sites. A study by JBKnowledge revealed that 74% of construction professionals use smartphones daily for work-related tasks, including plan viewing, time tracking, and field reporting. The CTC study found that 39% of hiring managers believe their employees need to improve their mobile device and app proficiency to succeed, and 36% of contractors also cite this as an area for improvement.

In addition, soft skills such as time management, professionalism, and communication were frequently mentioned in open-ended responses. These attributes directly influence safety, customer satisfaction, and project efficiency—making them just as critical as technical know-how.

# Training Roadblocks: Breaking Down the Barriers

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According to both contractors and hiring managers, the top two barriers to ongoing training are:

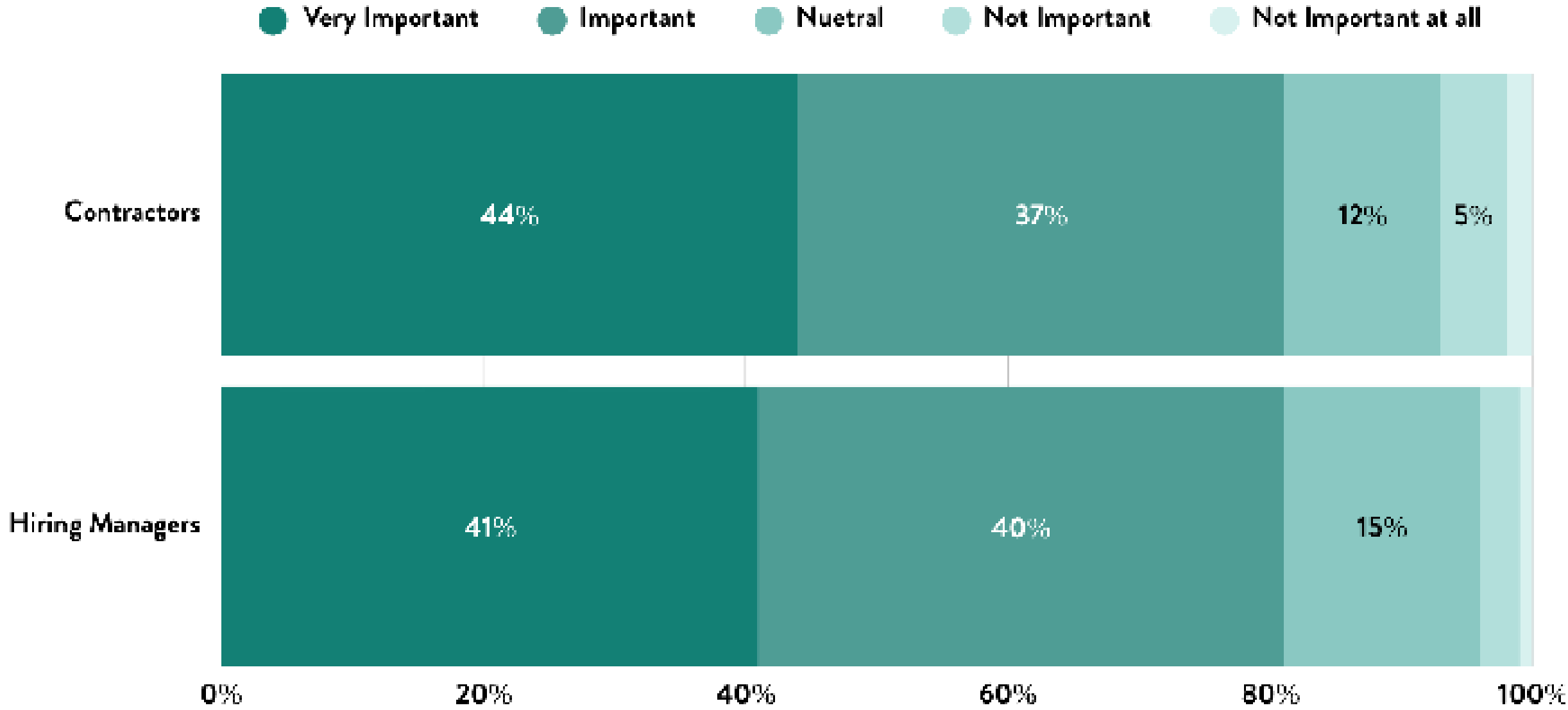


These limitations are significant. Many contractors work long hours and balance multiple jobs or clients, leaving little time to pursue additional certifications or formal education. Even when motivated, they often lack schedule flexibility to attend in-person classes.

The cost of training—whether out-of-pocket or due to limited reimbursement—was cited as a key deterrent. This aligns with findings from the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER), which reported that 35% of contractors forgo training due to affordability concerns.



# How Important Is Continuing Education for Career Growth?

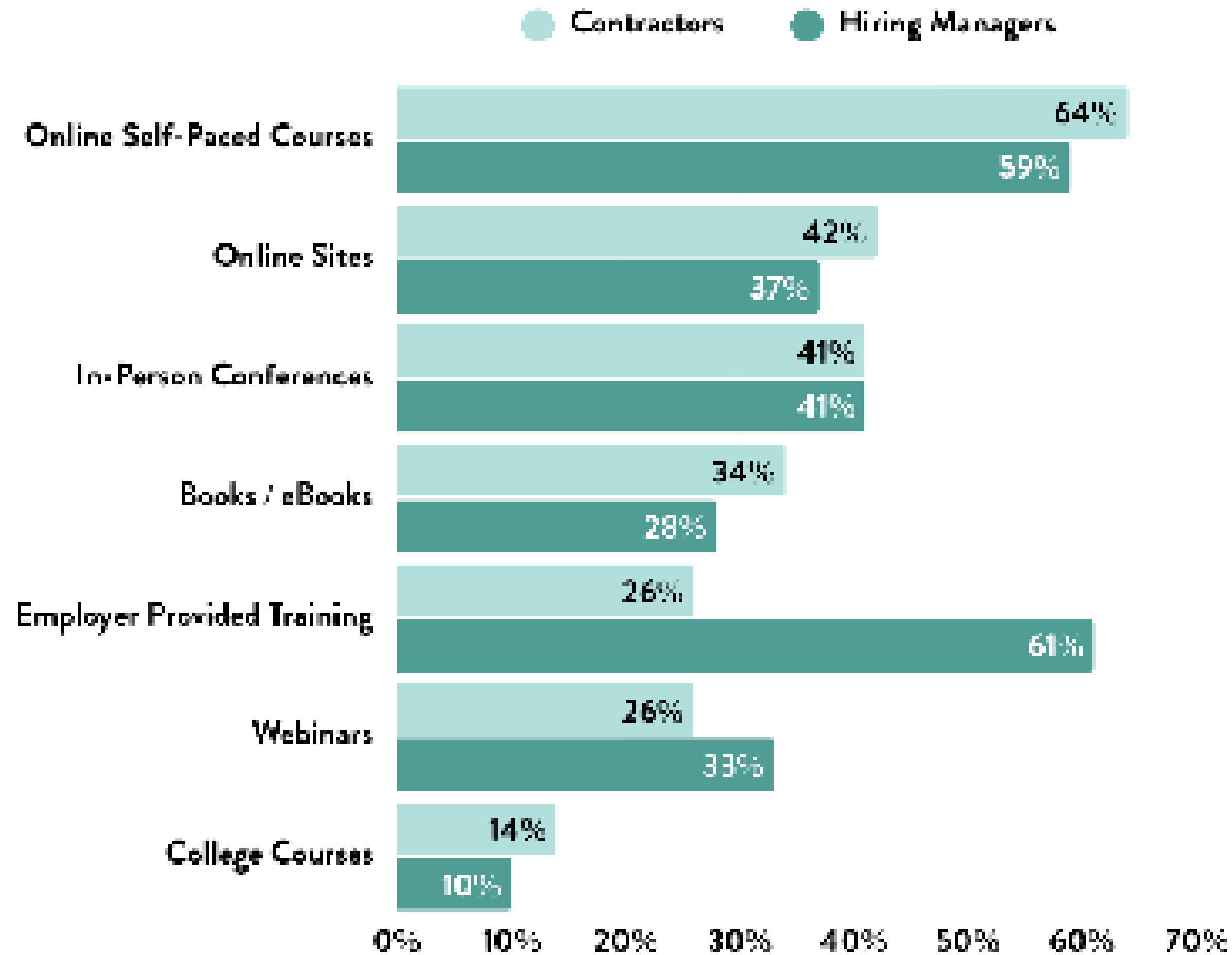


Interestingly, 62% of hiring managers said their organizations are at least somewhat supportive (with 31% citing very supportive) of their employee’s professional development. Yet, 28% of contractors said their employers offer no training. This highlights a disconnect in internal communication and a need for more accessible training models.

While there is a disconnect on the availability, affordability, and accessibility to training, both contractors and hiring managers agree that continuing education is vitally important to job success. In fact, 81% across the board believe continuing education is necessary for advancing their careers.

Combined, all these factors point to a need for more affordable, self-paced, and mobile-friendly training solutions that meet workers where they are—literally and figuratively.

## Preferred and Provided Resources for Professional Skill Development



*While over 60% of hiring managers offer employer-provided training, only a quarter of contractors prefer this method for skill development. Employers should prioritize online education to better align with employee preference,*

## Learning on the Go: The Shift Toward Flexible Education

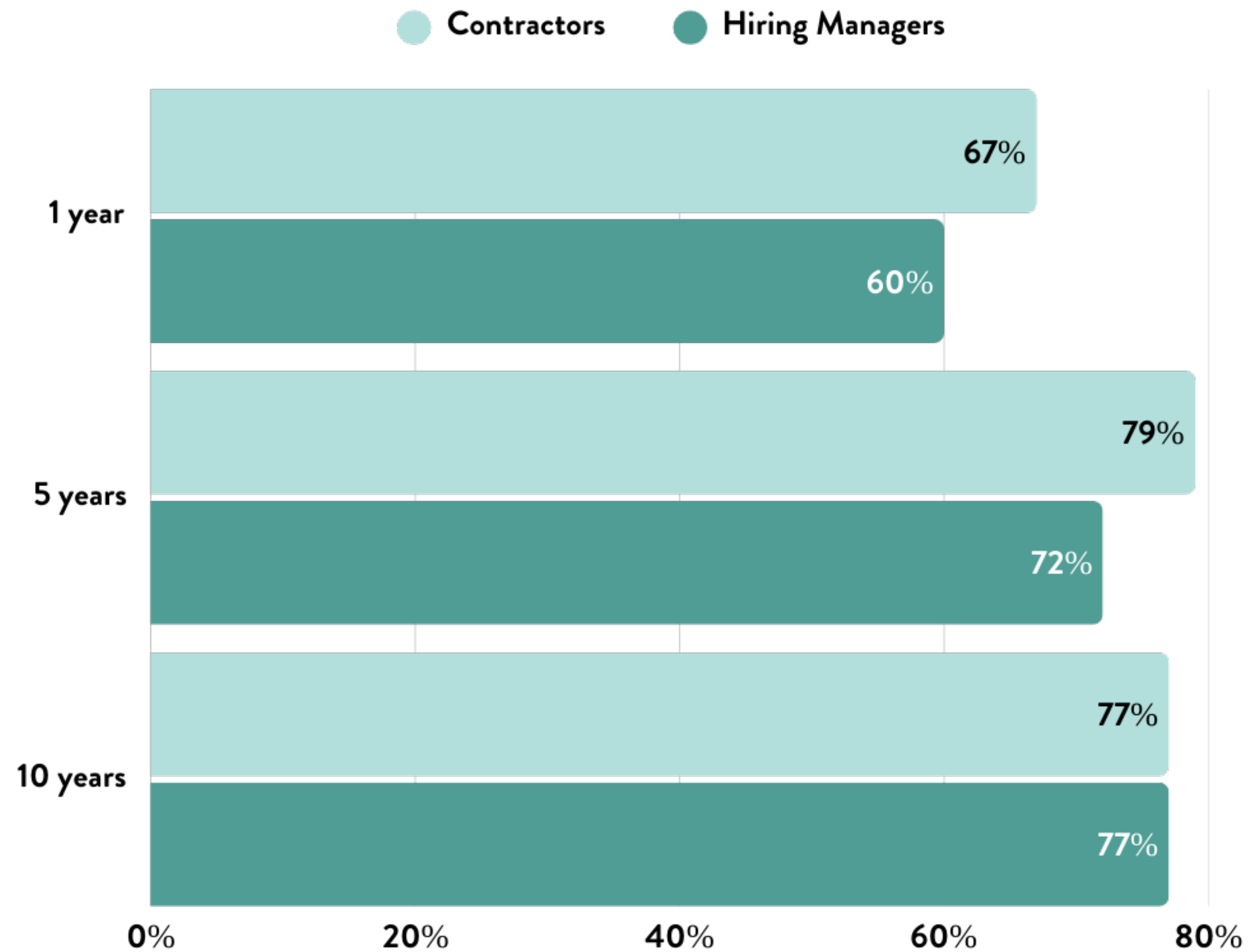
CTC's findings suggest a shift toward self-paced online learning:

- 69% of early-career professionals prefer online, on-demand formats.
- Experienced professionals tend to favor books or trade references.

Employers offering professional development often favor employer-provided training, online self-paced options, or in-person education, but contractors overwhelmingly prefer online options with in-person training coming in third.



## How Important Will Technology Improvements Be in 1, 5, and 10 Years?



### Learning on the Go: The Shift Toward Flexible Education

While hiring managers and contractors acknowledge the importance of AI and other job-related technology, only about 25% of respondents are currently using AI tools regularly. 79% of contractors and 72% of hiring managers believe it will be necessary to improve technology skills to be competitive in the industry within the next five years.

The construction sector is historically slow to adopt technology, but that is beginning to shift. According to McKinsey & Company, digitization and automation could boost productivity in construction by 14-15% over the next decade.



# Equipping the Future Workforce

To bridge the skills gap, CTC recommends:

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## Embrace Flexible Learning Models

- Prioritize self-paced, online learning modules for accessibility.
- Blend technical instruction with soft skill development.

## Support Employer-Led Initiatives

- Encourage companies to subsidize online courses.
- Offer bulk licensing or team plans for employers.

## Focus on Core Growth Areas

- Develop targeted curriculum around project management, estimating software, mobile tools, and client communication.

## Close the Confidence Gap

- Include self-assessments, scenario-based exercises, and peer feedback to help contractors align perception with real-world readiness.

# From Findings to Fixes: How CTC is Responding

## Construction Business Coaching Program

Close the gap between where your business is and where you want it to be. This course is designed to equip contractors with the high-impact skills most commonly lacking in the industry today, empowering them to meet employer expectations, scale confidently, and lead with strategic clarity. By taking the course, contractors will build capabilities in:

**Strategic planning and management**—business execution, market analysis, and growth strategy.

**Financial control and profitability**—managing cash flow, budgets, and profit margins.

**Operational excellence**—leading teams, optimizing projects, and ensuring quality.

**Marketing and sales success**—generating leads, managing customers, and boosting conversions.

**Sustainable growth**—developing teams, allocating resources, and building scalable systems.

## Construction Project Management Certification

Master the fundamentals of construction project management with a course designed to close critical skills caps and help contractors lead with confidence.

Gain hands-on experience with a sandbox version of Procore—an industry-leading platform that boosts collaboration and project outcomes. Learn to manage, plan, and lead construction projects from contract to completion with confidence and clarity.

# Closing the Skills Gap

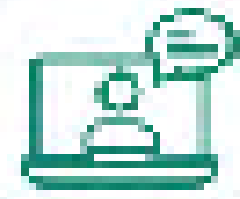
The skills gap in construction is not just a labor issue. It's a strategic challenge for businesses and a growth opportunity for individuals. By investing in accessible, high-quality training, both contractors and employers can future-proof their success.

To learn more or explore our catalog of courses, visit [contractortrainingcenter.com](https://contractortrainingcenter.com) or contact us for enterprise solutions.



# Why Contractor Training Center?

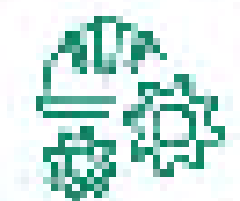
CTC provides expert-led courses, licensing exam prep, and continuing education designed to meet the modern demands of contractors and employers alike. Our programs are:



Available online and self-paced



Aligned with industry and licensing standards



Focused on real-world applications, including business, safety, and technology



# Contact Us

Phone: (888) 585-7350 | [ContractorTrainingCenter.com](https://ContractorTrainingCenter.com)



## Sources:

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- *Contractor Training Center Industry Survey, 2025*
- *National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER), 2023*
- *McKinsey Global Institute, "Reinventing Construction: A Route to Higher Productivity," 2022*
- *Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), 2024 Workforce Survey*

