



Get future ready: Learn the TAP skills

Be technology (T) ready, an analytics (A) nerd, and refine your people (P) skills



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The truly winning formula in today's job market is to possess both technical skills in the chosen subject domain, as well the TAP skills – technology ready, analytics nerd and people skills

In today's tech world, consumers have access to modern technology as never before. The cost of bringing technical know-how to the common man has come down sharply in recent years, spreading the technological revolution. As a result, nearly 2 in every 3 households in India had a mobile in 2011 and we can now own an iPhone for less than \$400, which is as powerful as the fastest supercomputer in 1975 costing \$5 million.

Rapid technological advancement however, is a double edged sword. We, the consumers are also the workers who tend to prefer relatively secure long-term jobs. In fact, without sufficient jobs with adequate incomes, there will not be enough consumers to buy the newest of gadgets! Machines, robots and automation however, are fast replacing jobs that once men and women performed. Not only that, machines are swapping people at the entry-level low-skilled jobs, but there is now increasing automation of knowledge-related work due to recent progress in computer science and linguistics. Robot doctors and software lawyers are now overtaking certain tasks traditionally performed by human specialists.

Which jobs are then safe from technology? The right question to ask however is, which skills, and not jobs that are safe from technical advance? First and foremost, those who can complement technology and manage machines will be in greater demand and command a premium in coming years. These workers will have to understand what functions machines can and cannot do, and hence, complement their work. For others, new technology allows freedom from the routine day-to-day tasks in our professions to focus on bigger ideas and new entrepreneurial ventures. Each entrepreneur and manager in this tech era will have to distinguish him from others, and bring to the table exciting ideas and value-add over above what technology can do.

The new age mantra to remain relevant and earn rich rewards therefore seems to be 'be distinct or be extinct' as Dr. Bala V Balanchandran, Founder of the Great Lakes Institute of Management and Professor Emeritus of Accounting Information & Management at the Kellogg School of Management states in a biographical book 'Dare to Dream'. In a similar vein, [Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee](#) argue in their much discussed book '[The Second Machine Age](#)', that "there has never been a worse time to be a worker with only 'ordinary' skills and abilities to offer, because computers, robots and other digital technologies are acquiring these skills and abilities at an extraordinary rate."

Today's young generation as well as our education system must focus on skills that the technology does not yet possess. Robots and machines, as of now, do not possess sufficient skills with require some form of human attributes such as imagination, innovation, intuition, interpretation, and inspiration. We thus need to focus and foster such skills that enhance these qualities in our young generation.

One such skill – that uses imagination, intuition and interpretation - is to develop a capacity to discern a generalized pattern or a story from a vast amount of data that advances in computer technology is able to collect. The computer-driven world presents us with information, which if properly analyzed can generate valuable insights providing a competitive advantage for corporations and form a cornerstone of corporate strategy. Humans and not the computers remain the best interpreters of data analysis that any software throws at us. Many businesses, especially in emerging countries, however, continue to struggle to take full advantage of the growing amount of data being collected. Skills such as interpreting and applying business and predictive analytics to day-to-day business needs such as figuring out changing customer trends and needs are where human skills will effectively partner technology.

Along with collaborating with technology and mastering the interpretation of data analytics, more and more employers now want their employees to arrive with sophisticated interpersonal skills, team work, and interact with clients with ease. Robots cannot, as of now at least, motivate people, cheer them up and cannot replace human emotions. Managers who are inspirational, and can motivate their team to improvement productivity will be irreplaceable. In other words, as Tyler Cowen, Professor of [economics](#) at [George Mason University](#) writes in his much popular book ‘Average is Over’, future jobs will require good “people skills” all the more.

The truly winning formula in today’s job market is to possess both technical skills in the chosen subject domain, as well the TAP skills – technology ready, analytics nerd and people skills. Our higher education system and business schools much ensure that India’s young generation is future ready by focusing on these skills, given the rapid pace with which the nature of jobs will change in tomorrow’s world.



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