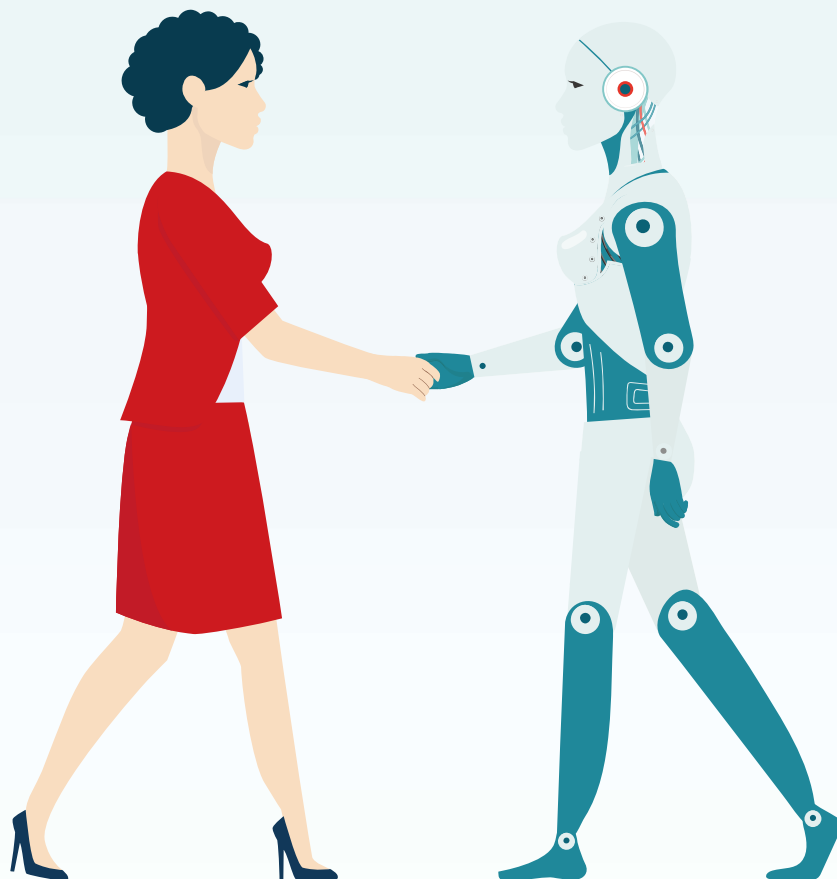




THE DEMAND FOR DIGITAL SKILLS: GENDER GAPS ACROSS OCCUPATIONS AND MANAGEMENT ROLES



Executive Summary

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important for managerial roles in Switzerland. Over the past decade, demand for these skills has risen sharply in managerial positions, making them a core component of the managerial toolkit alongside cognitive, social, and decision-making skills. But these skills are not equally available to everyone. Across the Swiss labor market, digital skills are most often required in occupations where men are overrepresented, and less so in roles where women are concentrated. A structural imbalance that may carry directly into the pipeline for management. Artificial intelligence risks reinforcing this imbalance.

To explore the demand for digital skills in Switzerland, the University of Zurich and Advance, with the support of the Office for Economy of the Canton of Zurich, analyzed more than one million Swiss job advertisements from 2015 to 2025. Using automated information extraction methods, we propose a current and comprehensive analysis of digital skill demand in the Swiss labor market, with a particular focus on managerial roles. To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive analysis of digital skill demand in the Swiss labor market to date.

The good news: the gender gap in digital skill demand across the Swiss labor market is narrowing

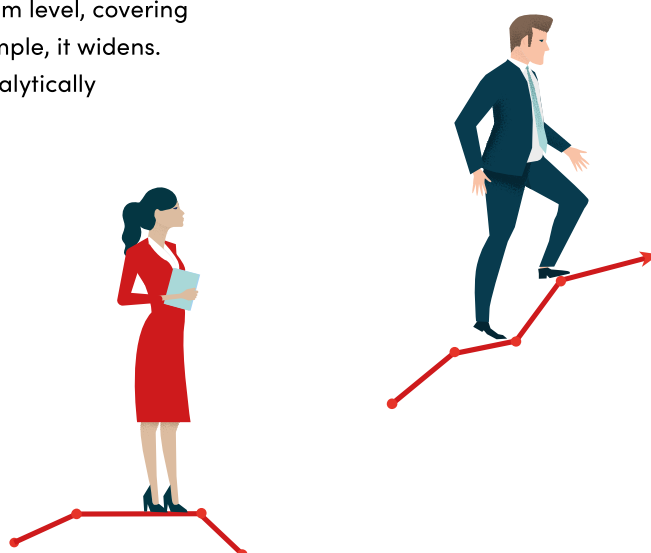
The gender gap in digital skill demand across the entire labor market has narrowed by 34% over the past decade. The trajectory is encouraging.

Across the Swiss labor market, employers are now asking for more digital skills in jobs more frequently held by women than they did in 2015. At the same time, more women are entering jobs where digital skills have already been in higher demand. Both shifts are visible across the labor market, and the convergence extends from basic to higher levels of complexity in digital skills.

The structural challenge: across the Swiss labor market the digital skill gap is widest for most complex digital skills

The gap is steepest at the advanced level.

The narrowing of the digital skill gap across all occupations, however, is not uniform. At the basic level, with everyday tools like Outlook and Excel, for instance, the gap between women and men is narrow. At the medium level, covering business software and resource planning systems for example, it widens. At the advanced level, covering tools used for the most analytically demanding work, it is widest.



The evolving landscape of management: digital skill demand is rising fast, slow gains for women, mounting risk from AI

The demand for digital skills in managerial roles has risen by 55% over the past decade. Despite this increase, the share of women in management rose slowly. AI is shrinking hires in male-dominated digital occupations, putting women's slow gains at risk.

The demands of management have changed. Swiss employers now ask for more digital skills in job advertisements for managerial positions than they did a decade ago, with notable increases at the medium and advanced levels. Over the same period, women's share of management roles grew only slightly, from 33.3% to 37%.

Digital skills are not the sole determinant of managerial success. Instead, performance depends on a broader bundle including cognitive, social, and decision-making skills. But as digital requirements rise, structural barriers limiting women's access to them matter more than they once did. The pipeline for women into management is not moving at the speed these leadership roles now require, and the labor-market patterns described above may partly explain why: management is typically reached through occupations that build the skills it demands, and women are concentrated in occupations where digital skills are exercised less.

The compounding risk: AI could reverse the progress made

AI does not arrive on neutral ground.

Analyses of this Whitepaper show that job postings are relatively declining in occupations most exposed to generative AI technologies. At the same time, these occupations tend to be disproportionately digitally intensive.

Taken together, these findings point to a clear risk: access to digitally intensive occupations may become more constrained for women, potentially reversing some of the progress achieved over the past decade. For example, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, drawing on LinkedIn data, documents that women globally are more likely than men to hold roles disrupted by generative AI, and less likely to see their roles augmented by it.

"Switzerland's prosperity depends on putting all of its talent to work. In 2026, this principle takes on renewed meaning. As artificial intelligence transforms the labor market, digital skills remain unevenly distributed between genders. At the same time, demand for these skills is rising in managerial positions, potentially creating a new structural barrier to women's advancement. This digital skills gap does not reflect a difference in capability. It is the result of structural conditions that employers, educators, the public sector, as well as individuals have the power to change. Addressing the gap is not only a matter of fairness; it is essential to safeguarding Switzerland's competitiveness in the decade ahead."

Samuel Möhle, Co-Head
Division of Business and Economic Development
of the Canton of Zurich



The opportunity: from data to action

Switzerland's prosperity rests on fully harnessing its talent. Leaving half the workforce behind is not an option.

Closing the digital skills gap is an economic imperative that depends on coordinated action across stakeholders. And the action must reach both the broader labor market, where the gap is formed, and managerial pipelines, where it compounds.

Employers decide who is hired, who is trained, who is promoted, and who is given access to the work that builds digital skills. They decide whether AI tools are audited for gender bias before being deployed in hiring and performance management. They decide whether digital upskilling reaches the full workforce or only part of it.

Educators shape who arrives in the labor market with which skills. They influence whether girls and young women are encouraged into the disciplines where digital skills are built, and whether mid-career retraining reaches those whose roles are most exposed to automation.

Policymakers set the framework within which everyone operates. Childcare, parental leave, taxation, and pension design are connected to the topic of digital skills, they determine who can sustain the careers in which digital skills are built. The same applies to AI governance. As Switzerland shapes its national AI strategy, this is the opportunity to build gender equity into the framework from the start.

Women can act ahead of all of this. They can shape their position within managerial career paths, especially in accessing digital skills alongside cognitive, social, and decision-making skills. This requires actively building relevant expertise, making career choices beyond stereotypes, and using networks, mentoring, and career sponsorship to move into roles that combine leadership and digital capability.

The gap is structural. The trend is encouraging. The window is now.



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About the Office for Economy of the Canton of Zurich

The Business and Economic Development Division supports established companies, assists with business relocations, maintains international economic relations and strengthens the networking among key stakeholders. By doing so, the division helps to further develop Zurich as an attractive, competitive and internationally connected business location.

A particular focus is placed on the economic location's capacity for innovation. The division supports companies with innovation-related topics and acts as a partner to innovation hubs and platforms. Through the [Innovation Zurich](#) platform, it provides guidance within the diverse innovation ecosystem, highlighting developments, trends and opportunities, and promoting networking within and across industries.

In light of demographic, labor market and technological change, the division is also committed to the area of skilled labour. Together with partner organisations, it supports projects that encourage girls and women to pursue careers in STEM, as well as initiatives that promote employability through a competence-based approach. Examples of these initiatives include "More Women in Tech" and "ZüriSkills".

www.innovation.zuerich



About the Swiss Job Market Monitor (SJMM), University of Zurich

The Swiss Job Market Monitor (SJMM) at the University of Zurich advances scientific understanding of the Swiss job market and its long-term development. Through the collection of representative and time-comparable data from job advertisements, it systematically monitors evolving dynamics in the job market. The resulting data and analytical insights are shared with academic audiences, public administrations, policymakers, and the wider public.

Affiliated with the Institute of Sociology at the University of Zurich, the Swiss Job Market Monitor is headed by Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Marlis Buchmann.

www.stellenmarktmonitor.uzh.ch

About Advance

Advance is the leading business association for gender equality in Switzerland, a network of over 150 Swiss-based companies committed to increasing the share of women in management.

It's a proven fact that gender-mixed teams perform better, are more innovative and likely to generate more profit.

With a concrete program, Advance supports companies to turn diversity into a competitive advantage. Because a gender-equal and inclusive workplace is a win-win for all genders, business and society.

Find out more here

www.weadvance.ch

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