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Soft, Digital and Green Skills for Smart Designers:

Designers as Innovative TRIggers for SMEs in the manufactoring sector

POLISH REPORT
on "Soft, Digital & Green" competences for designers

Co-funded by the
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POLISH REPORT

about the critical "Soft, Digital & Green" competences that a designer should have to successfully innovate SMEs' manufacturing habitat products

Activities:
- Online survey taken on May 15th to June 16th.
- Workshop with entrepreneurs on 17th June 2020

Research Team:

Maciej Witkowski
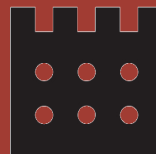**Michał Szyszka**
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POLISH SURVEY

21 respondents: representatives of traditional manufactureres
(owners or general managing directors)

Examples of business areas:

Furniture/small architecture:
- furniture manufacturing, carpentry, manufacturing of ornaments,
- eco-friendly functional furniture for schools and kindergartens,
- small architectural components, like: benches, bins, bike stands etc.,

Food
- food delivery and a take-away restaurant,
- traditional bread baking,

Craft
- ceramic pattern shop, wattle craft company, producer of zippers
- stained-glass windows and artistic glass
- eco-friendly wooden toys
- production of entertainment equipment: air hockey, basketball, rocking chairs, billiard tables
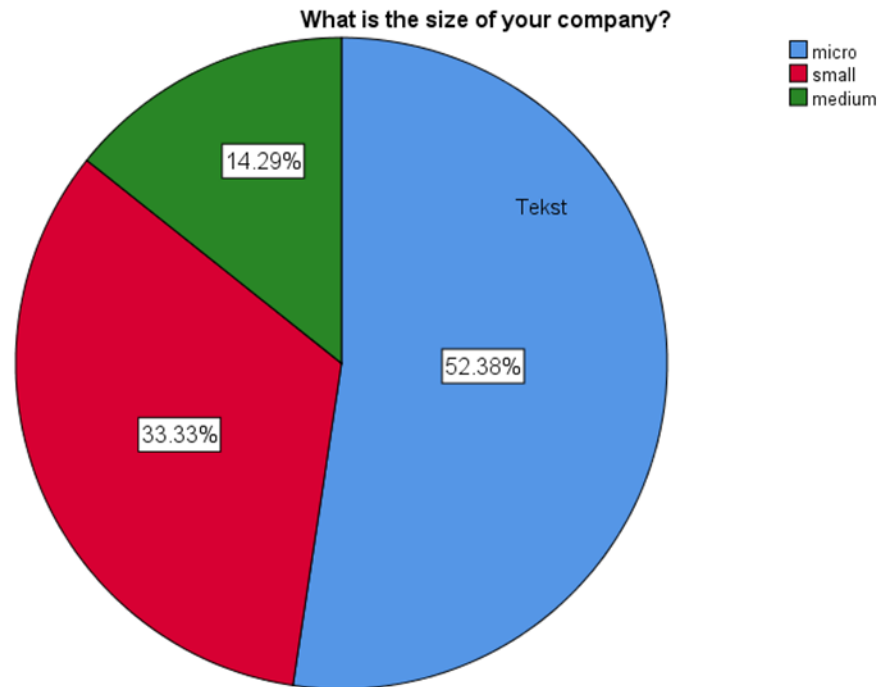
IT & Ditgitalisation
- animated films, IT services
- digital and offset printing

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POLISH SURVEY

The group of surveyed enterprises consisted of:
- **52,38% micro-enterprises**
- **33,33% small enterprises**
- **14,29% medium enterprises**

What is the size of your company?

- micro
- small
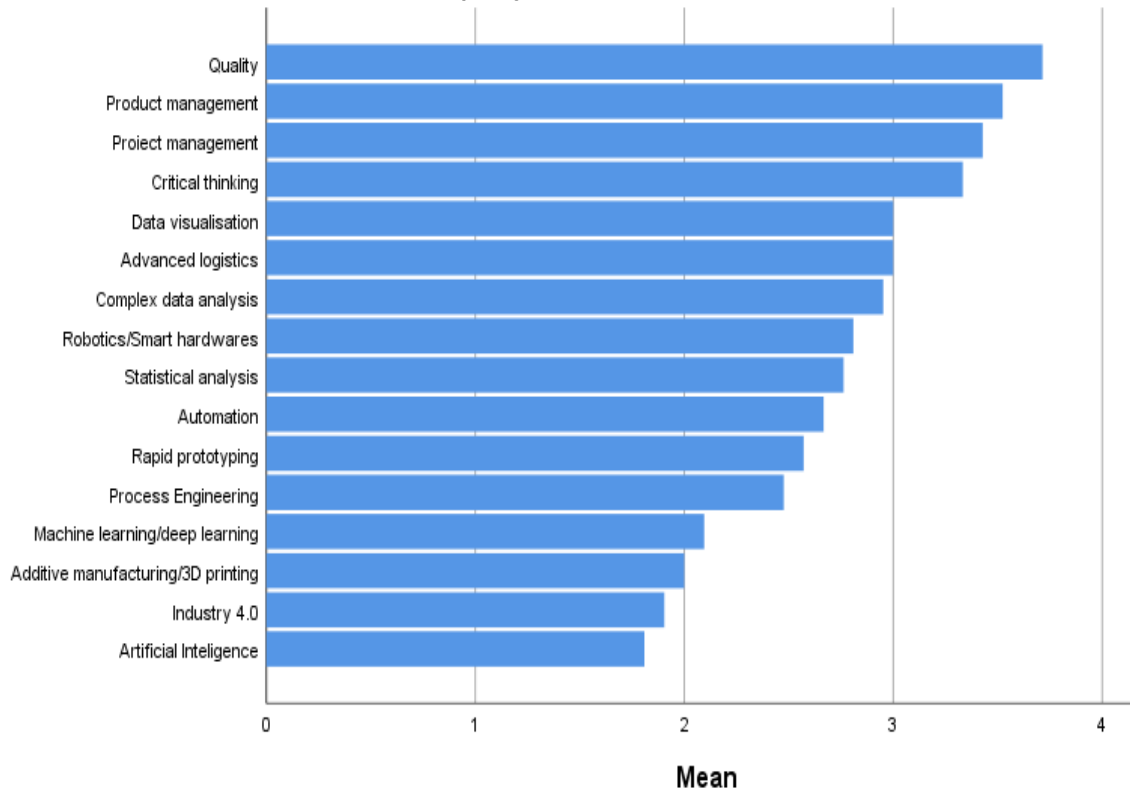- medium

14.29%

Tekst

52.38%

33.33%

POLISH SURVEY

The **most important** **Technical/Technological skills** are: quality management, product management, project management, critical thinking, data visualisation, advanced logistics and complex data analysis.

How do you consider the importance of the following technical/technological skills from your companies prospect?
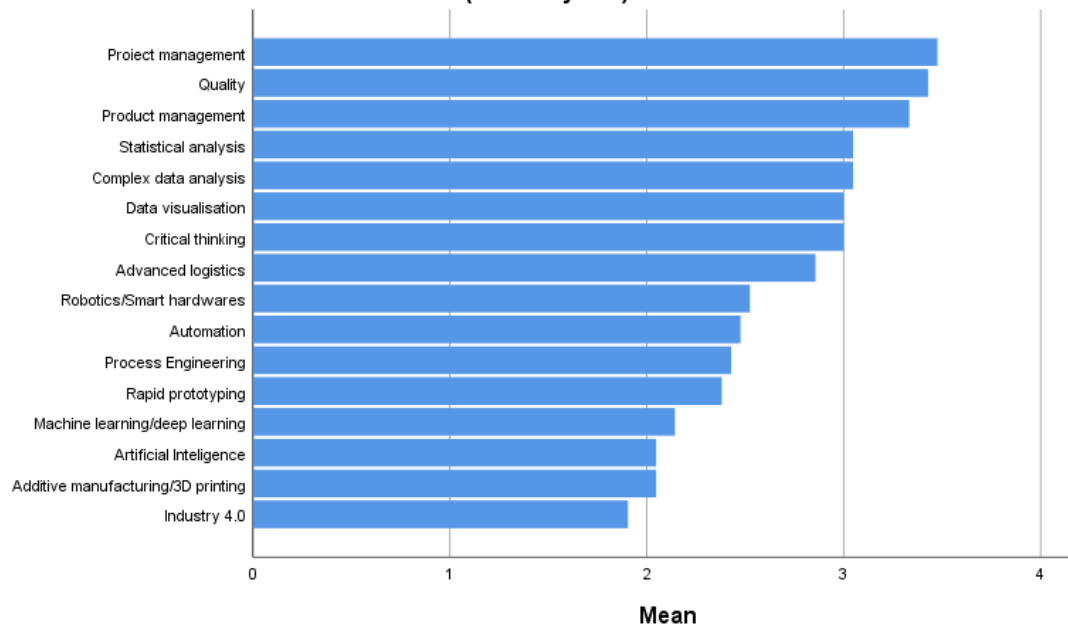
POLISH SURVEY

Technical/Technological skills which will be improved in next 3-5 years: project management, quality management, product management, critical thinking, data visualisation, advanced logistics and complex data analysis.

Please indicate the level of your commitment to improve the following technical skills and competencies in the near future (next 3-5 years)?
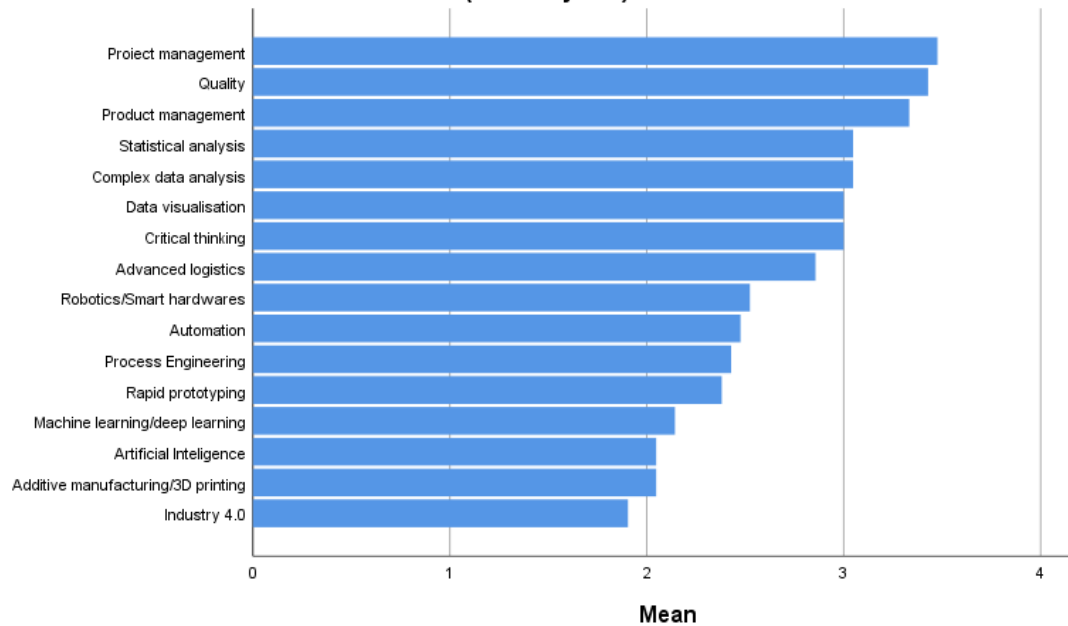
POLISH SURVEY

The most important Digital skills: e-commerce and social media, cyber security, programming, digital marketing, networking and IT systems

Please indicate the level of your commitment to improve the following technical skills and competencies in the near future (next 3-5 years)?

POLISH SURVEY

Possibility of training in digital skills.
57% of the surveyed admit there is no possibility of organising trainings and courses aiming to develop digital competences of employees

Do you have possibilities to train your employees in the digital skills listed above?
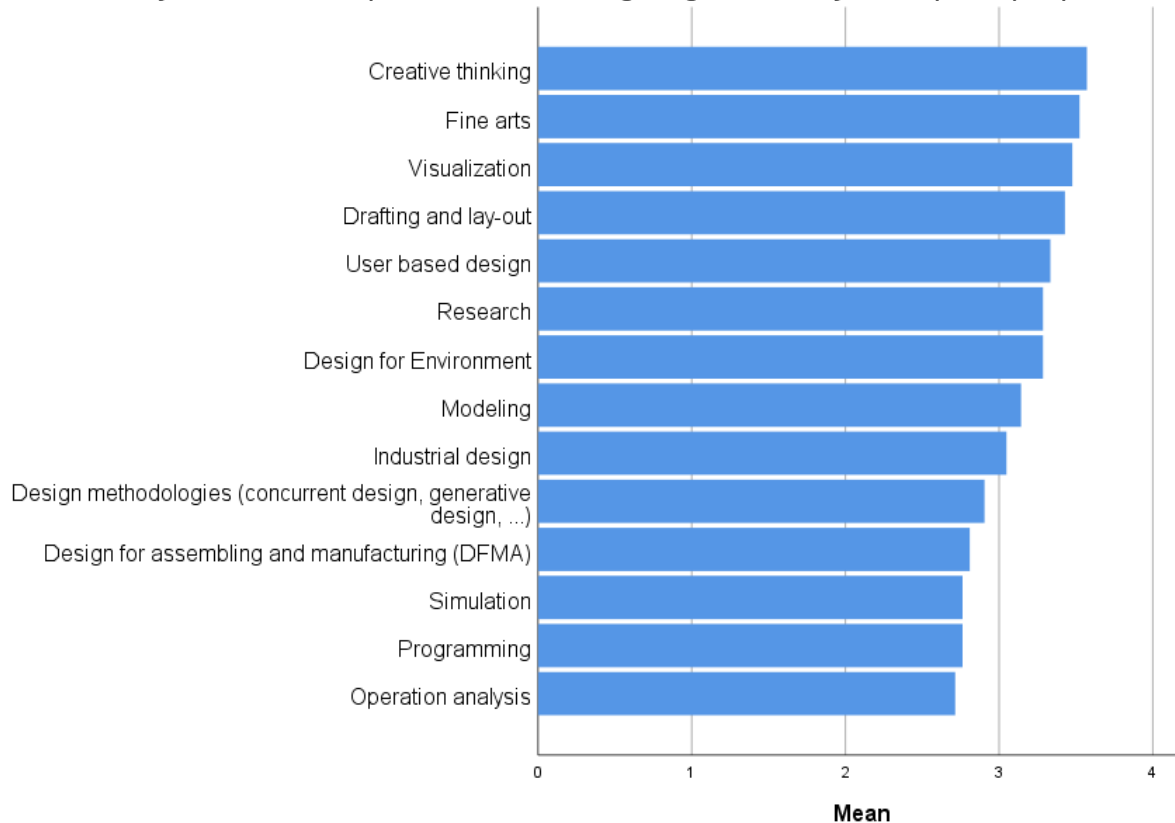
POLISH SURVEY

The **most important Design skills** are: creative thinking, fine arts, visualisation, drafting and lay-out, user badge design, design research, design for environment

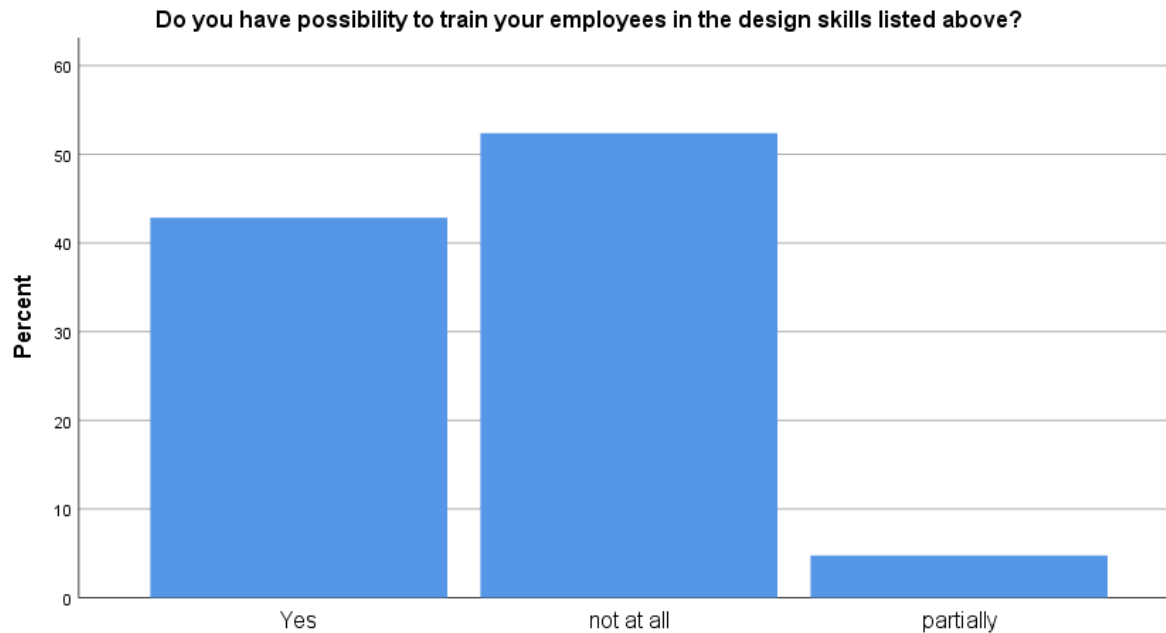**How do you consider the importance of the following design skills from your companies prospect?**

Skill	Mean
Creative thinking	~3.6
Fine arts	~3.5
Visualization	~3.5
Drafting and lay-out	~3.4
User based design	~3.3
Research	~3.3
Design for Environment	~3.3
Modeling	~3.1
Industrial design	~3.0
Design methodologies (concurrent design, generative design, ...)	~2.9
Design for assembling and manufacturing (DFMA)	~2.8
Simulation	~2.7
Programming	~2.7
Operation analysis	~2.7

Mean

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POLISH SURVEY

Possibility of training in design skills.
In the field of design skills **52%** of the respondents declared that the company does not have necessary resources at their disposal

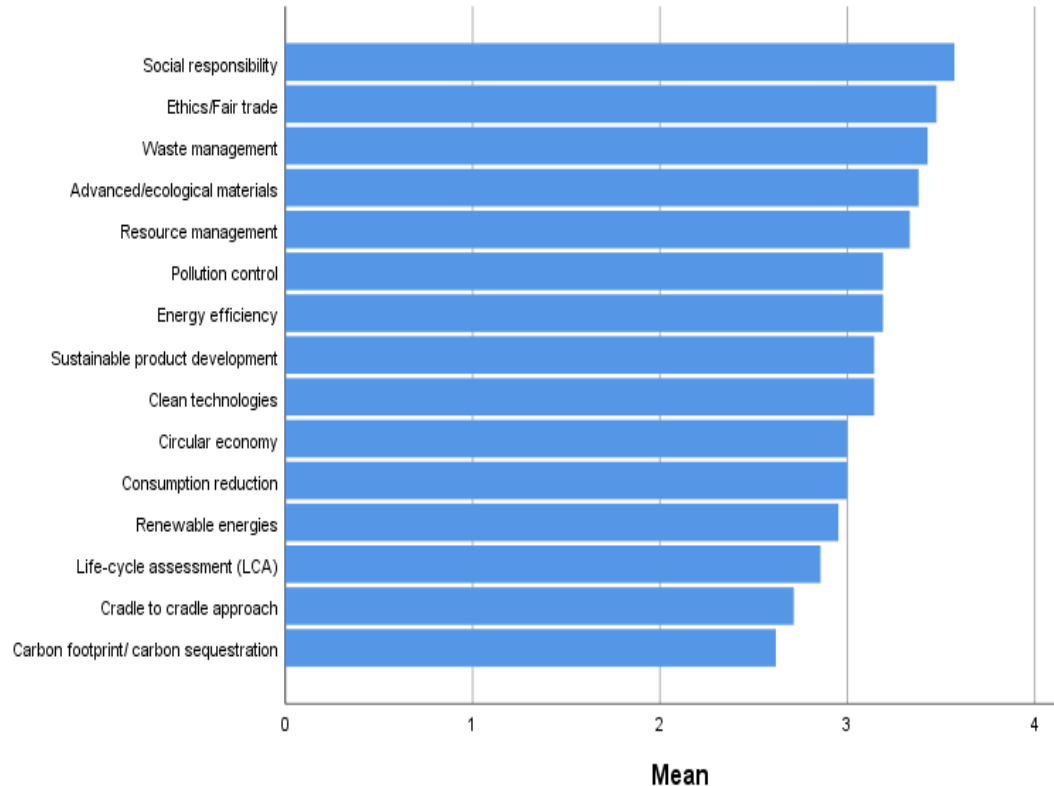Do you have possibility to train your employees in the design skills listed above?

POLISH SURVEY

The **most important Green skills** are: social responsibility, ethics, waste management, advanced/ecological materials, resource management

How do you consider the importance of the following green skills from your companies prospect?
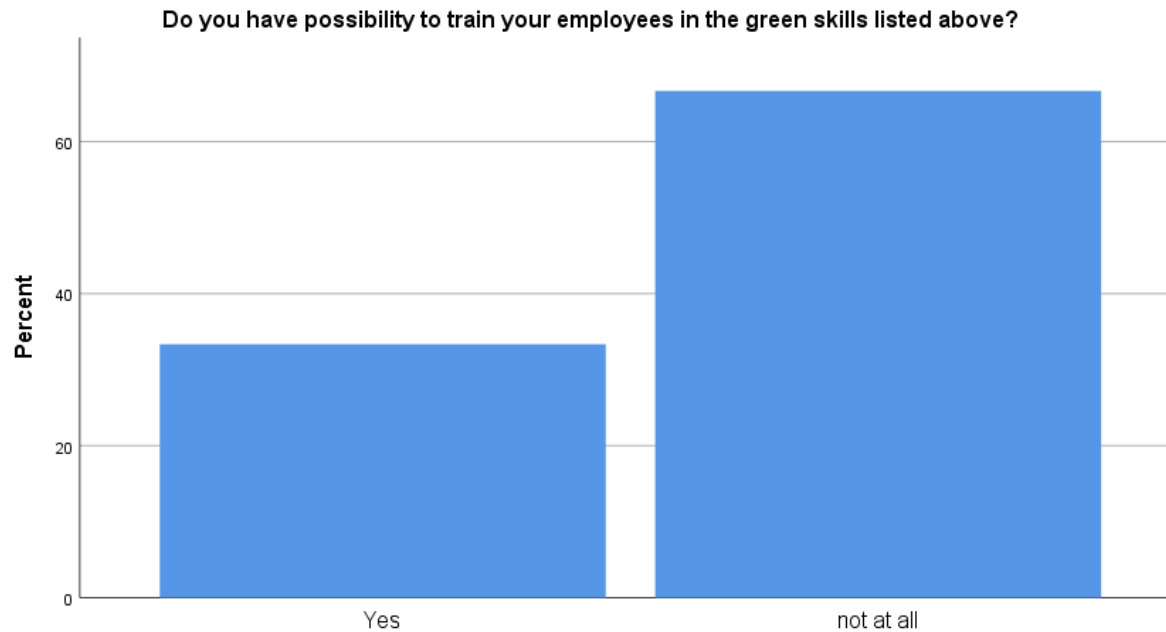
POLISH SURVEY

In the **next 3-5 years** the companies are expected to intensify their efforts aimed at developing a vast group of **green skills.** It is worth noting the set of 2 green skills, which – although they are not particularly important for the organisation and despite the fact that employees do not perceive this competence to be highly developed – according to the respondents are going to be **very challenging for the organisation**. These skills are **energy efficiency and pollution control**. This indication should be interpreted in the context of the region in which the research was conducted. **The Silesian voivodeship is currently restructuring its energy sources.** Energy efficiency and pollution control are going to pose a significant challenge in the coming years for the region highly dependent on bituminous coal.

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POLISH SURVEY

Possibility of training in green skills.
in the field of green skills **65%** of the respondents declared that the company does not have necessary resources at their disposal

Do you have possibility to train your employees in the green skills listed above?
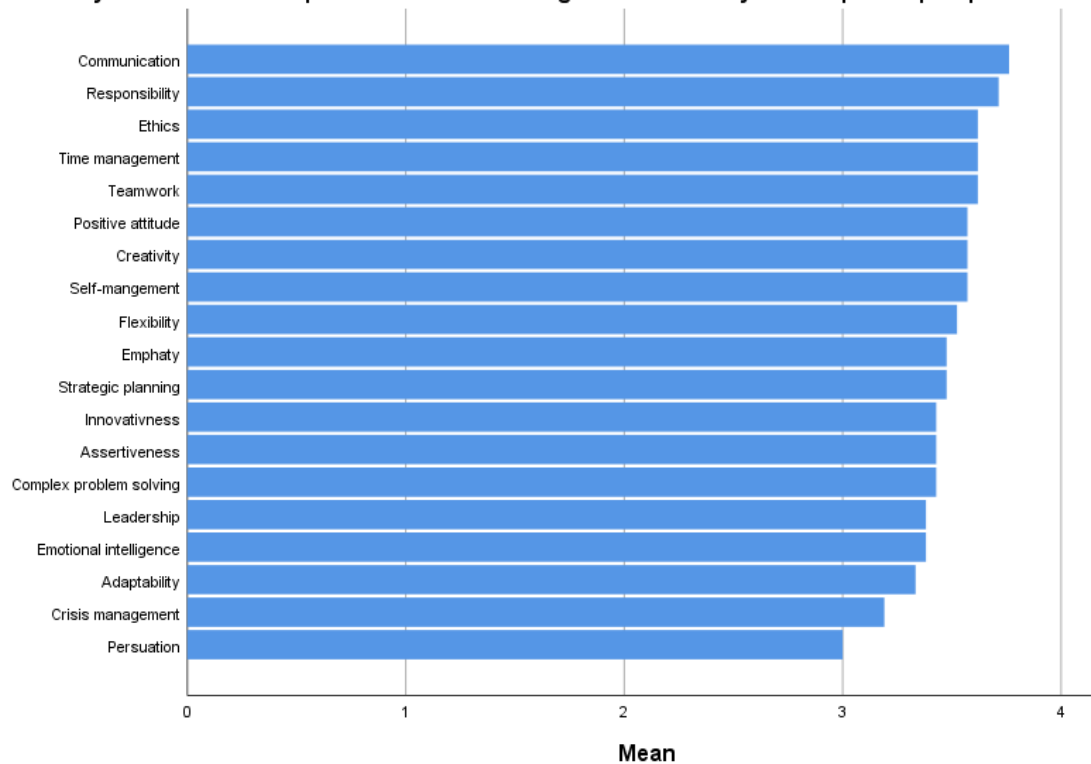
POLISH SURVEY

It might be concluded that all competences in the area of **soft skills** are perceived to be especially important in comparison to other competences.

How do you consider the importance of the following soft skills from your companies prospect?

The respondents do not recognize themselves to be particular competent in this field. In the context of a relatively large significance of soft skills it is worth noting deficits in the area of **communication and time management.** In both cases the respondents assess their skills in this area to be low despite their relatively large significance.
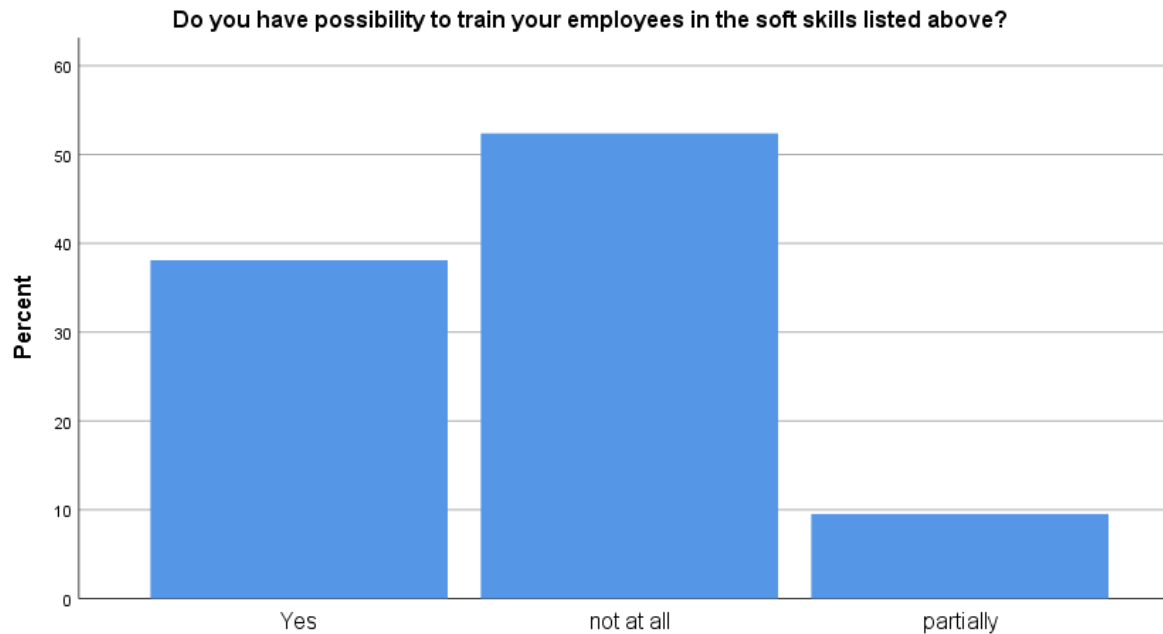
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POLISH SURVEY

Possibility of training in soft skills.
in the field of soft skills **52%** of the respondents declared that the company does not have necessary resources at their disposal


Do you have possibility to train your employees in the soft skills listed above?

Key skills to face industry challenges in the post-COVID-19 era

The research demonstrates that the "traditional manufacturer" sector **has been severely affected by the crisis inflicted by COVID-19 pandemic** .

Only 6 from the surveyed entrepreneurs declared that the current situation has not had an impact on their business.
13 organisations were forced to reduce their operation,
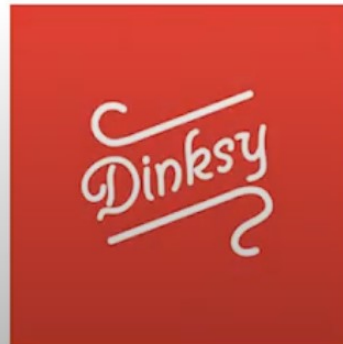while **2** of them have suspended their activity.
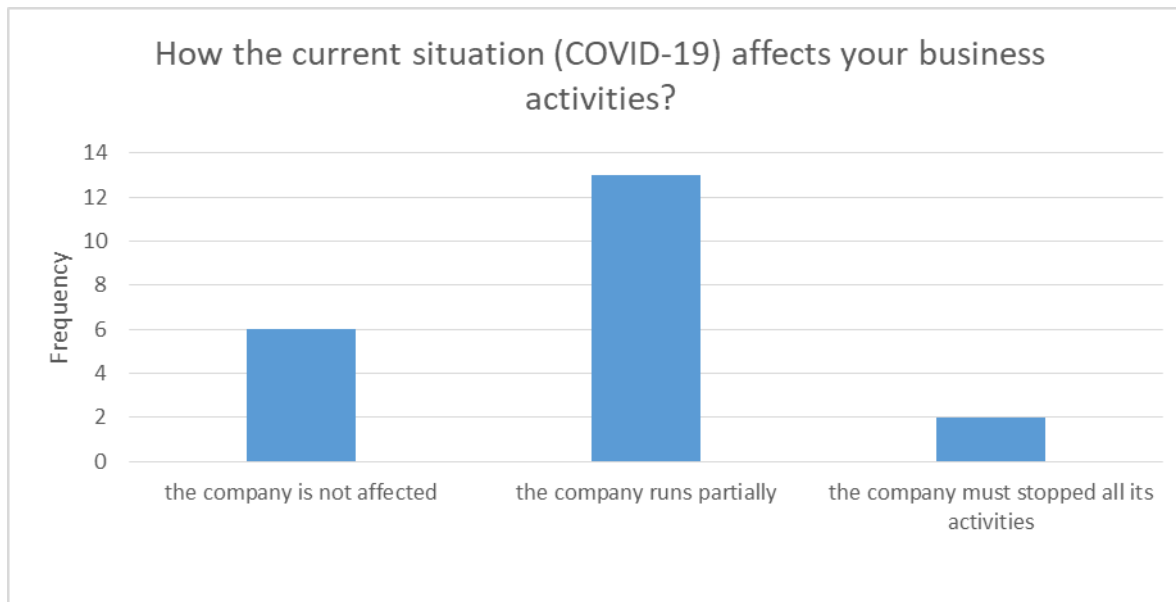
How the current situation (COVID-19) affects your business activities?

Workshop with Entrepreneurs - Panels

The workshop included 3 focus panels:

- Determining key competences of students and graduates from the perspective of the labour market – professional and project experiences of the sector.

- Current trends – what does an owner of a company/institution need to face?

- What do employers expect from newly recruited employees?

- What new challenges arise from the pandemic.

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Workshop with Entrepreneurs
Expected competences of an ideal employee in the company

- **Communication skills** / Teamwork skills / Good communication with the customer (the answer appeared 4 times)

- Professional and **personal responsibility** / (the answer appeared 3 times)

- **Creativity** /Ingenuity (the answer appeared 3 times)

- The ability to shape the strategy of functioning and promoting the company online / in the new media space / proficiency in handling new media / **Digital Skills** / Computer Animation (the answer appeared 3 times)

- Performing work and duties with **passion** (the answer came up twice)

- **Involvement** (the answer came up twice)

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Workshop with Entrepreneurs

What competences do employers miss in young employees in the context of the previously indicated trends in the enterprise (organisation) of the "traditional manufacturer"?

- **Communication skills** (the answer appeared 4 times)

- **Cooperation** (the answer appeared 2 times)

- **Precision** (the answer appeared 2 times)

- **Humility** (the answer came up twice)

- **Willingness to learn** (the answer came up twice)

- **Involvement** (the answer came up twice)

- **Responsibility** (the answer came up twice)

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Workshop with Entrepreneurs
What new needs/expectations towards employees have emerged in the context of the current pandemic

- **Ability to build communication**
- **Ability to work in subgroups (teamwork)**
- **Punctuality and timeliness**
- **Self-discipline**
- **Ability to find solutions (creativity)**
- **Loyalty**
- **Independence**
- **Hardworking**

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Workshop with Entrepreneurs
Mapping of future labour market trends

Digitalization and transition to online space of design, production, distribution and customer contact processes,

Self-sufficiency and independence - the collapse of long supply chains – building closer or direct designer-producer-supplier-client relationships,

Locality - using local materials, relying on local suppliers, reaching out to local customers - will play an increasingly important role,

Universal design - including not only social inclusion but also recycling, ecology, environmental neutrality, design, production economics will increase,

Relations and ties - the economy will come closer to a pro-partner, not a pro-transaction model.

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THANK YOU!!!

Ewelina Widerska & Sebastian Kwaśniewski