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The Top 10 Skills In Demand at the Top 10 US Companies in 2020

May 28, 2020 by Meredith Metsker



Fortune recently released its 66th annual [Fortune 500 list](#), which ranks the top 500 U.S. companies based on revenue. Considering these companies employ over 28 million people worldwide, we wanted to know the top 10 skills they are looking for in those employees.

Are there any noteworthy similarities or differences between companies? How do the top 10 skills at these companies compare to the top 10 in-demand skills for all employers nationally?

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To figure this out, we took the top 10 companies on the Fortune 500 and explored which skills they mention most frequently in their job postings.

Top 10 US companies

Walmart takes the top spot for the eighth year in a row, followed by Amazon, which jumped three spots from 2019. This is especially impressive growth considering Amazon first appeared in the Fortune 500 top 10 in 2018 (at No. 8).

Continuing an unbroken Fortune 500 streak since 1955, ExxonMobil comes in third and bumped Apple down to fourth.

Health and medical-related companies hold four of the next six spots with CVS Health, UnitedHealth Group, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen. Warren Buffet's holding company Berkshire Hathaway and AT&T round out the top 10.

1. Walmart
2. Amazon
3. ExxonMobil
4. Apple
5. CVS Health
6. Berkshire Hathaway
7. UnitedHealth Group
8. McKesson
9. AT&T
10. AmerisourceBergen

Top 10 skills in demand at the top 10 US companies in 2020

To find the top skills, we pulled data from millions of online job postings and compared them by company from 2017-2019. This allows us to see how each company's in-demand skills have changed over time. Here are a few key findings:

- Communications is the No. 1 skill overall and is one of the top in-demand skills at each of the top 10 companies.
- Other top skills include: management, leadership, customer service, operations, and sales.
- Many of these skills are considered "soft" skills, but are crucial in keeping huge companies functioning.



Here are the top 10 skills that appear most in these top 10 companies' job postings. The number in parentheses indicates the number of top 10 companies for whom this skill is one of their top 10 in-demand skills.

1. Communications (10x)
2. Management (9x)
3. Leadership (7x)
4. Customer service (6x)
5. Operations (6x)
6. Sales (6x)
7. Innovation (5x)
8. Problem solving (4x)
9. Detail oriented (4x)
10. Presentations (3x)

As you can see, communications appears in every single one of the top 10 companies' top 10 lists. Communications is admittedly a broad category. But it's still relevant to the smooth operation of any company—especially large ones like the Fortune top 10 with anywhere from 21,000 to 2.2 million employees. This has become even more apparent recently with COVID-19 forcing many companies to embrace remote work.

Communications includes everything from internal and external communication strategies, to giving and receiving feedback, to listening, to public speaking, and more.

Management came in a close second, appearing as a top 10 skill for each of the top 10 companies except for Berkshire Hathaway. Management is another broad, but critical, skill. It includes everything from the management of people, to financial resources, to products and projects, to operations, and more.

Communications at No. 1 and management at No. 2 have traded places since our [2018 version of the Top 10 Skills at the Top 10 Companies](#). But in general, the skills companies want most have remained relatively consistent.

Now let's look at each company individually and see what they are prioritizing.

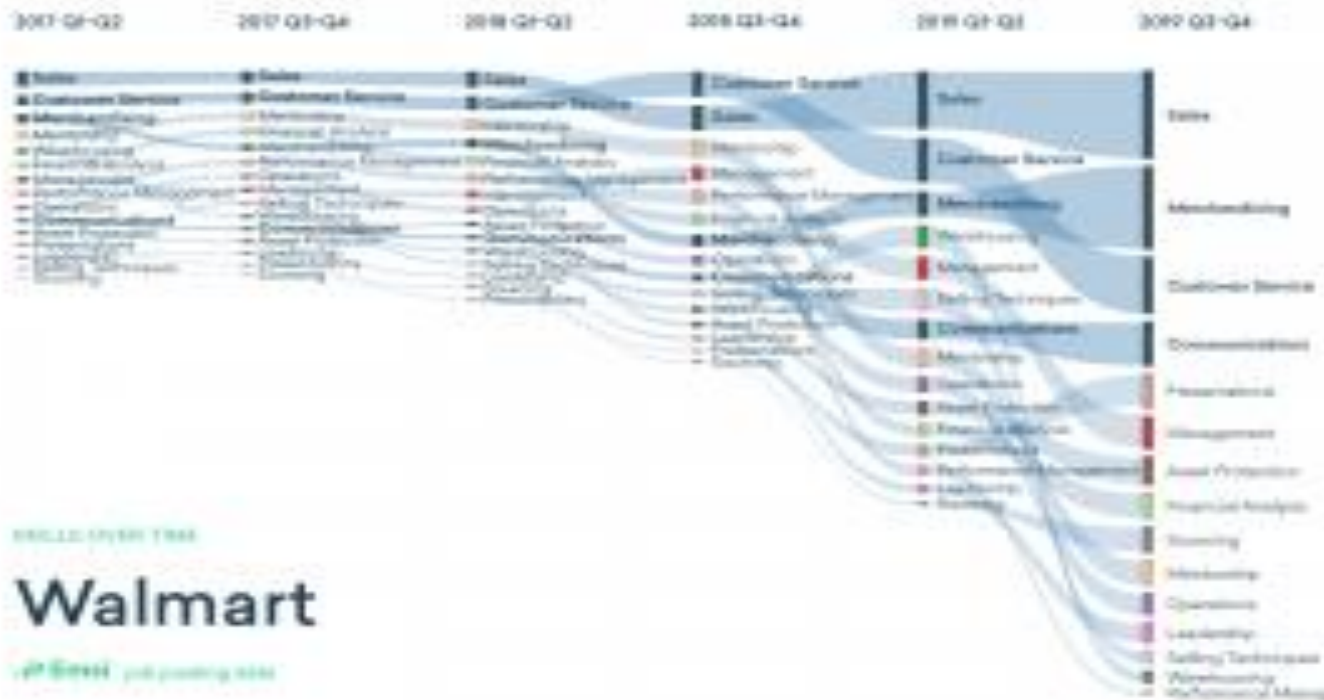


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#1 Walmart

The top 10 skills you need to work at Walmart in 2020



Since 2017, we have seen a considerable increase in Walmart's job postings, with a particularly large jump in the last two quarters of 2019. Unsurprisingly, the top three skills the [retail giant](#) is looking for are **sales**, **merchandising**, and **customer service**.

1. Sales
2. Merchandising
3. Customer service
4. Communications
5. Presentations
6. Management
7. Asset protection
8. Financial analysis
9. Sourcing
10. Mentorship



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The Sankey (or flow) diagram above shows how Walmart adjusted the skills listed in its job postings between the first two quarters of 2017 and last two quarters of 2019. This provides an interesting look at how companies and their employees evolve. In Walmart's case, the company has maintained its focus on sales, product, and customer experience.

It's also interesting to note the change in Walmart's prioritization of communications. It went from being the No. 7 skill in early 2017 to the No. 4 skill in late 2019.

#2 Amazon

The top 10 skills you need to work at Amazon in 2020





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[Amazon](#) catapulted from No. 5 to No. 2 this year after increasing its annual revenue by 21% to \$281 billion. Notice the increased posting activity in 2019, and how **communications** has stayed at or near the top of the list, while management has dropped several spots since 2017.

Also note the massive jump in **warehousing** in late 2019. We'll likely see this skill continue to dominate Amazon's postings into 2020 due to COVID-19. In fact, Amazon announced last month that it [hired 175,000 additional people](#) in its fulfillment and delivery network in March and April to help meet increased customer demand.

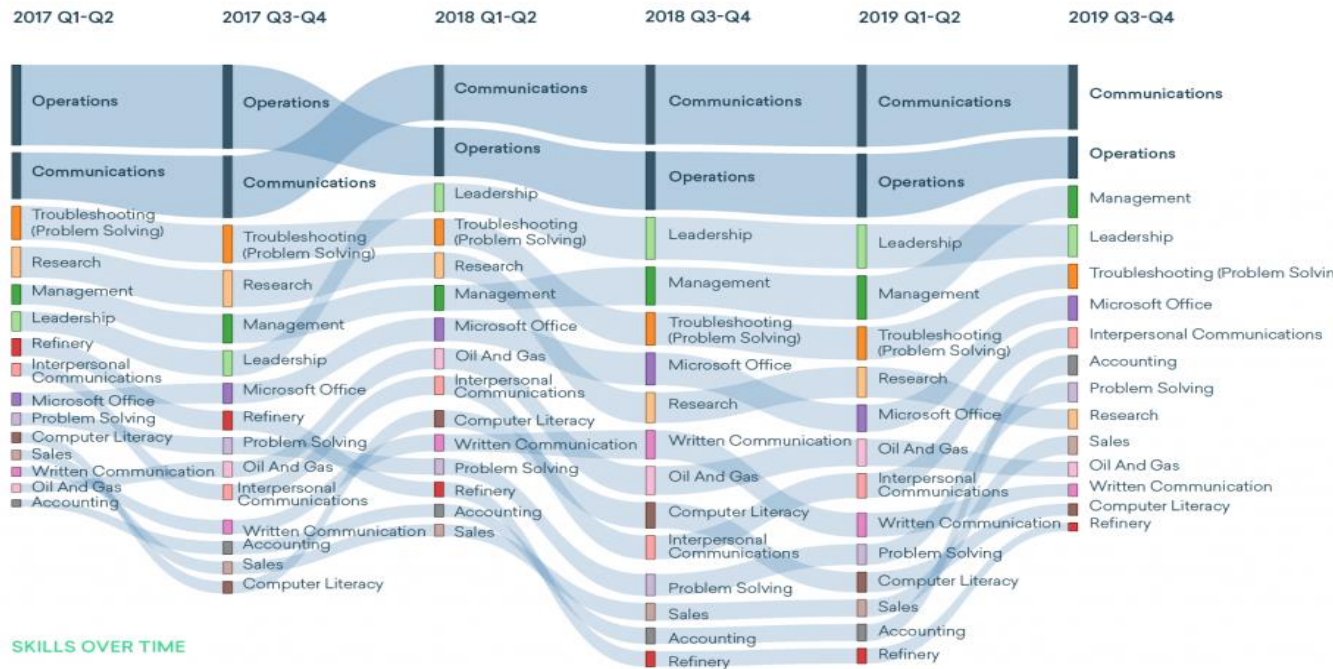
1. Warehousing
2. Communications
3. Amazon Web Services
4. Leadership
5. Innovation
6. Operations
7. Management
8. Software development
9. Scalability
10. Detail oriented

As Amazon continues to grow, communications will be increasingly important to keep the digital retail juggernaut running efficiently. This could particularly come into play as Amazon [builds its HQ2](#) and responds to [employee concerns over working conditions](#).



#3 ExxonMobil

The top 10 skills you need to work at ExxonMobil in 2020



SKILLS OVER TIME

ExxonMobil

Emsi job posting data

At [ExxonMobil](#), **communications** and **operations** are critical. You'll also notice a good mix of other soft skills like leadership, management, and problem solving. Hard skills more related to the production of Exxon's key product, like oil and gas and refinery, both dropped off the top 10 list in late 2019.

1. Communications
2. Operations
3. Leadership
4. Management
5. Troubleshooting
6. Microsoft Office
7. Interpersonal communications
8. Accounting
9. Problem solving
10. Research



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Communications has consistently remained Apple's most in-demand skill since early 2017. Meanwhile, management has become slightly less of a priority, while innovation and Python have risen through the ranks. And note how sales and customer service went from being in the top five in early 2017 to being the bottom two in late 2019.

1. Communications
2. Innovation
3. Python (programming language)
4. Management
5. Problem solving
6. Debugging
7. Detail oriented
8. Apple products
9. Leadership
10. Software engineering





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#6 Berkshire Hathaway

The top 10 skills you need to work at Berkshire Hathaway in 2020



Also ranked as the sixth most valuable company, Warren Buffet's [Berkshire Hathaway](#) dropped to No. 6 this year after reaching a record high of No. 2 in 2017. The holding company needs a strong mix of **real estate**, **sales**, and **customer service** skills.

1. Real estate
2. Sales
3. Valid driver's license
4. Customer service
5. Negotiation
6. Selling techniques
7. Marketing strategies
8. Communications
9. Advocacy
10. Purchasing



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[UnitedHealth Group](#)'s job postings are largely dominated by **management**. And in general, the top skills have remained mostly the same, but the order now favors softer skills like **communications** and **leadership** as opposed to product-specific skills like Medicare, nursing, and Medicaid.

1. Management
2. Communications
3. Microsoft Excel
4. Leadership
5. Customer service
6. Innovation
7. Operations
8. Microsoft Office
9. Medicare
10. Nursing

#8 McKesson

The top 10 skills you need to work at McKesson in 2020



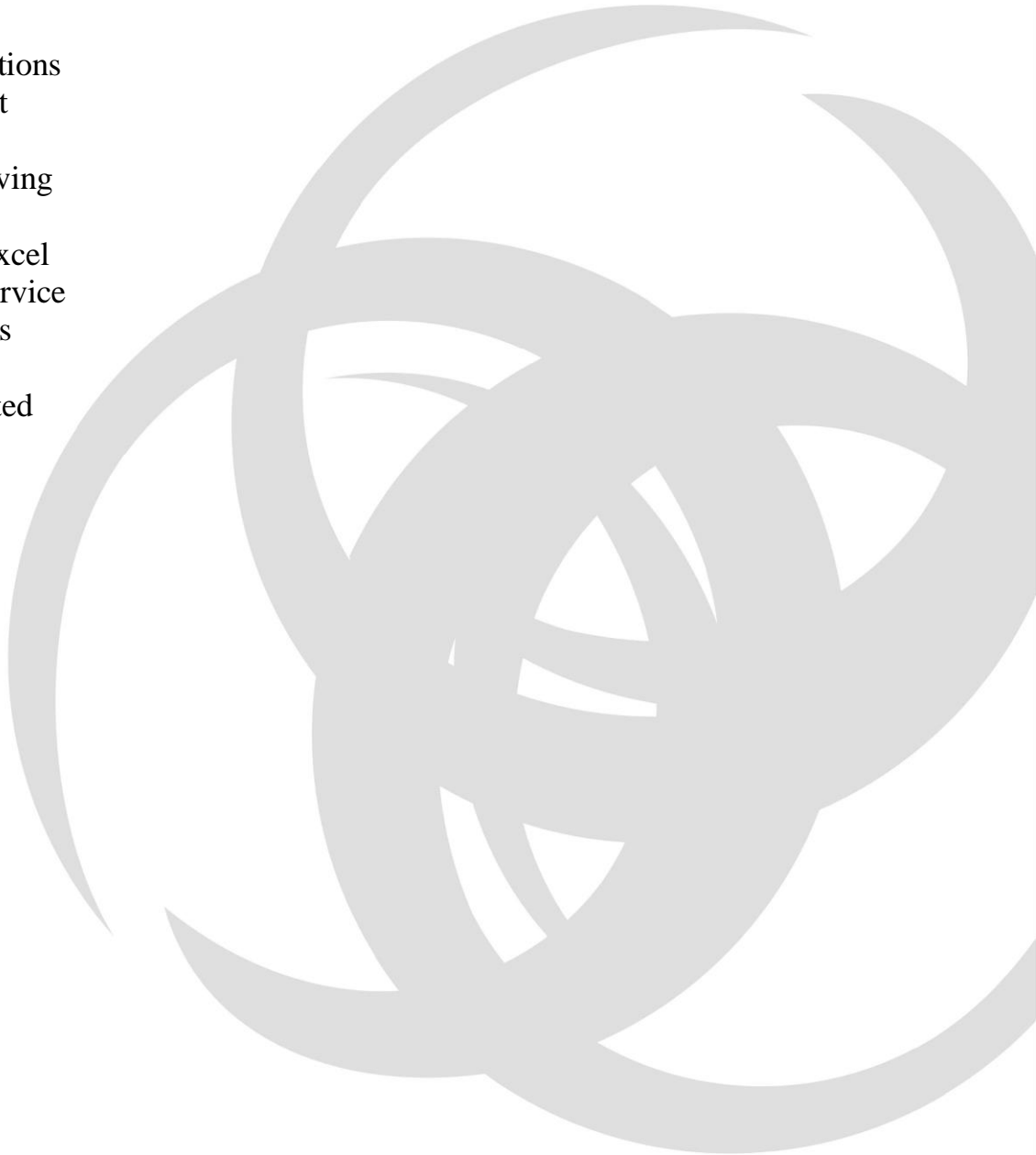


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McKesson is the U.S.'s largest pharmaceutical distributor with over 70,000 employees. So, it makes sense that a company of that size requires communications, management, and leadership skills.

There's also been a steady increase in job postings since 2017, and their top three skills remain the same. It's interesting to note how **warehousing, sales, and pharmaceuticals** have all dropped in the last year. This may have something to do with McKesson increasing their demand for tech roles like software developers and computer and information system managers.

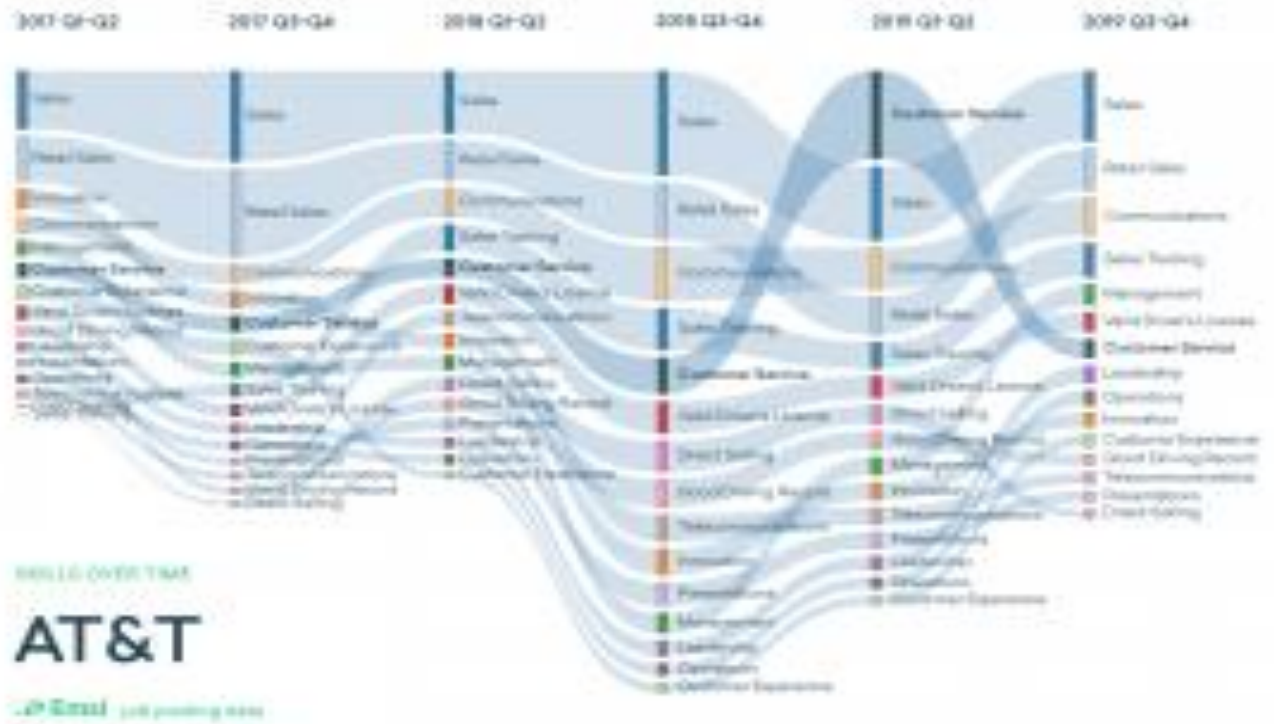
1. Communications
2. Management
3. Leadership
4. Problem solving
5. Operations
6. Microsoft Excel
7. Customer service
8. Presentations
9. Sales
10. Detail oriented





#9 AT&T

The top 10 skills you need to work at AT&T in 2020



Unsurprisingly, the [telecommunications conglomerate](#) requires more customer-facing skills than many of the other top companies. In fact, note the major uptick in **customer service** in early 2019. But like CVS, AT&T still clearly values communications, even if it's less sought after than sales-related skills.

1. Sales
2. Retail sales
3. Communications
4. Sales training
5. Management
6. Valid driver's license
7. Customer service
8. Leadership
9. Operations
10. Innovation



AT&T's profits dropped by 28% in 2019, which might explain why the company slowed down its job postings a bit. You can see the decline in overall posting activity by the way the Sankey chart narrows as it moves to the right after 2018 Q3-Q4.

#10 AmerisourceBergen

The top 10 skills you need to work at AmerisourceBergen in 2020



[AmerisourceBergen](#) is the second largest drug distributor in the U.S, earning nearly \$180 billion in revenue. However, profits dropped 48% due to impairment charges against PharMEDium, the company's troubled compounding unit ([now closed](#)). Adding to AmerisourceBergen's woes are thousands of lawsuits and a federal criminal investigation over its "alleged role in the nation's opioid epidemic," according to Fortune. ([McKesson](#) is in the same boat).



Perhaps this is why **communications** and **management** skills are consistently in high demand. Such skills are certainly useful when responding to legal challenges and public relations issues.

1. Communications
2. Detail oriented
3. Interpersonal communications
4. Management
5. Organizational skills
6. Sales
7. Operations
8. Presentations
9. Computer science
10. Problem solving

Top 10 skills in demand across all US companies

Now that we've looked at the top 10 skills at the top companies, let's look at the top 10 skills across *all* companies in the U.S. You'll notice a lot of similarities.

1. Communications
2. Management
3. Customer service
4. Sales
5. Leadership
6. Operations
7. Detail oriented
8. Problem solving
9. Presentations
10. Valid driver's license

When we explored the most frequently mentioned skills in jobs postings, we found that communications, management, customer service, and sales showed up the most. So not only are these skills important to the top dogs in the U.S. economy, but they're also important across the board.



No. 1 skill: Communications

Given the sheer size of the top 10 Fortune 500 companies, it makes sense that skills like communication, management, leadership, and operations are consistently sought after. After all, these kinds of skills are the glue keeping these giants together.

Whether it's recent graduates looking to break into the workforce or experienced workers wanting a career shift, communications is clearly a critical skill to have. There is massive demand, and it will take you far in just about any industry. From manufacturing or healthcare to software and logistics, communications is critical.

Soft skills are in high demand

Also, notice that these top companies are looking for a lot of soft skills mixed with hard (or technical) skills. This mirrors the trend we're seeing in the rest of the market. Yes, these large companies need workers with skills related to their specific products and services. But they also value the ["human skills" more commonly associated with the non-STEM degrees.](#)

In short, it's important not to discount the importance of soft skills like communications, management, leadership, operations, and innovation. If the job postings from these Fortune 500 top 10 tell us anything, it's that these skills are timeless, transferable, and valuable.

[Looking to integrate skills data into your HRIS or ATS? We can help!](#)



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