

Market Intelligence

The Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Companies Expect from Business School Graduates

Corporate Recruiters Survey 2018

In partnership with:



The Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Companies Expect from Business School Graduates, Corporate Recruiters Survey 2018 Report is a product of the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), a global, nonprofit association of 223 leading graduate business schools. Founded in 1953, we are actively committed to advancing the art and science of admissions by convening and representing the industry and offering best-in-class products and services for schools and students. GMAC owns and administers the Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®) exam, used by more than 7,000 graduate programs worldwide. Other GMAC assessments include the NMAT by GMAC™ exam, for entrance into graduate management programs in India and South Africa, and the Executive Assessment, specifically designed for Executive MBA programs around the world. The Council is based in the United States with offices in the United Kingdom, India, and Hong Kong.

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Introduction

1,066 Employers Worldwide Responded to the Corporate Recruiters Survey in 2018

The Corporate Recruiters Survey provides an overview of current employer hiring demand for MBA and business master's graduates and examines hiring practices and trends by industry and world region.

The Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®), together with survey partners EFMD and MBA Career Services and Employer Alliance (MBA CSEA), conducted the Corporate Recruiters Survey in February and March 2018, in association with career services offices at 96 participating graduate business schools worldwide. RelishMBA also assisted with recruitment of survey participants.

Analysis in *The Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Companies Expect from Business School Graduates, Corporate Recruiters Survey 2018 Report* is based on responses received from 1,066 employers in 42 countries worldwide who work directly with participating business schools, including 20 percent in the Fortune Global 100.

Featured topics in this report include:

- The knowledge, skills, and abilities that employers require of new business school graduates
- The ability of hiring companies to find business school talent with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities

Interactive Benchmark Report

Participating graduate business schools and responding employers receive access to the 2018 Corporate Recruiters Interactive Benchmark Report.

Business School Participation in GMAC Research

GMAC Research offers graduate business schools opportunities to gather data and generate insights about the business school pipeline.

Schools can sign up to participate in the GMAC Application Trends Survey, Corporate Recruiters Survey, and Alumni Perspectives Survey on our survey sign-up page:

gmac.com/surveysignup

What Skills Do Employers Most Frequently Require From Recent Business School Graduates, and Which Are the Most Difficult to Find?

Graduate business school programs and their students require timely insights from employers to ensure the skillsets they focus on are in sync with current market demands.

The findings outlined in this report, based on the 2018 Corporate Recruiters Survey, highlight the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) companies most frequently require from new business school hires and identify the KSAs that companies have the most difficulty finding in the talent pool of recent business school graduates.

The findings demonstrate that most companies require their recent graduate business school hires have a blend of interpersonal skills (e.g., working with others to achieve a common goal), intrapersonal skills (e.g., behaves ethically and exerts the necessary effort and persistence to achieve goals and manage setbacks), and problem-solving abilities (e.g., the ability to find solutions to difficult or complex problems).

The findings also demonstrate how some skills are easier for employers to find than others. The skills companies have the most difficulty finding among recent business school graduates include Integrated Reasoning (e.g., ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems), leadership, and strategic planning.

Business schools may want to use this information to assess their curriculums' relevance to current market demand. Schools and faculty can use these insights to assist their students in developing skillsets that employers value. Career services offices can use this information to coach students in the development of their resumes and provide guidance for the hiring process.

Similarly, business school students and recent graduates can use this information to determine areas for which they may require additional instruction or preparation. In addition, they can use this information to guide their job search and tailor their resumes to stand out in a competitive labor market.

Key Findings

Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills make up the majority of the skills employers most frequently require from business school hires. In addition, problem solving and Integrated Reasoning (IR) skills round out the top ten skills required by companies. The top ten skills required by companies are:

1. Working with others (required by 93% of responding companies)
2. Manage self (89%)
3. Problem solving (87%)
4. Adaptability/flexibility (86%)
5. Listening (86%)
6. Organization/time management (85%)
7. *Evaluate* – An IR skill, defined as the ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources (82%)
8. Comprehension and logic (81%)
9. Written communication (80%)
10. *Organize* – An IR skill, defined as the ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems (78%)

The skills that employers most often require and have the most difficulty finding have the greatest value in the marketplace because they are in high demand and scarce. The ten skills employers most frequently say are both required and difficult to find are:

1. *Combine* - An IR skill, defined as the ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems (44% of companies say it's both required and difficult to find)
2. *Organize* – An IR skill, defined as the ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems (43%)
3. Leadership (32%)
4. Problem solving (29%)
5. *Evaluate* – An IR skill, defined as the ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources (25%)
6. Ability to put theory into practice (25%)
7. Strategic planning (25%)
8. Relationship management (24%)
9. Data analysis and interpretation (24%)
10. Adaptability/flexibility (24%)

Key Findings by World Region

Regional analysis highlights variations in the skills most frequently required and those that are difficult to find among recent business school graduates. The top two skills each region most frequently reports as being required and difficult to find are the IR skills of *organize* and *combine*.

Companies in the Asia-Pacific region

- The three most frequently required skills Asia-Pacific companies seek in recent business school hires are problem solving, listening, and the IR skill of *combine*—defined as the ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems.
- The skills Asia-Pacific employers most often require and have the most difficulty finding include leadership, an entrepreneurial spirit, and strategic planning skills.

Companies in Europe

- The three most frequently required skills European companies seek in recent business school hires are working with others, adaptability, and the IR skill of *evaluate*—defined as the ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources.
- The skills European employers most often require and have the most difficulty finding include leadership, problem solving, a global mindset, and self-management.

Companies in the United States

- The three most frequently required skills US companies seek in recent business school hires are working with others, self-management, and problem solving.
- The skills US employers most often require and have the most difficulty finding include leadership, problem solving, and an ability to put theory into practice.

Key Findings by Industry

Industry analysis also highlights variations in the skills most frequently required and those that are difficult to find among recent business school graduates. As is the case across world regions, the top two skills each industry most frequently reports as being required and difficult to find are the IR skills of *organize* and *combine*.

The following skills round out the top five list for each industry:

Consulting

- Ability to put theory into practice
- Problem solving
- The IR skill of *evaluate*, defined as the ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

Energy/Utilities

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Data analysis/interpretation

Finance/Accounting

- Leadership
- Relationship management
- Problem solving

Health Care

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Relationship management

Technology

- Problem solving
- Leadership
- Adaptability/flexibility

Manufacturing

- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Global mindset

Nonprofit/government

- Leadership
- The IR skill of *evaluate*, defined as the ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources
- Problem solving

Products/Services

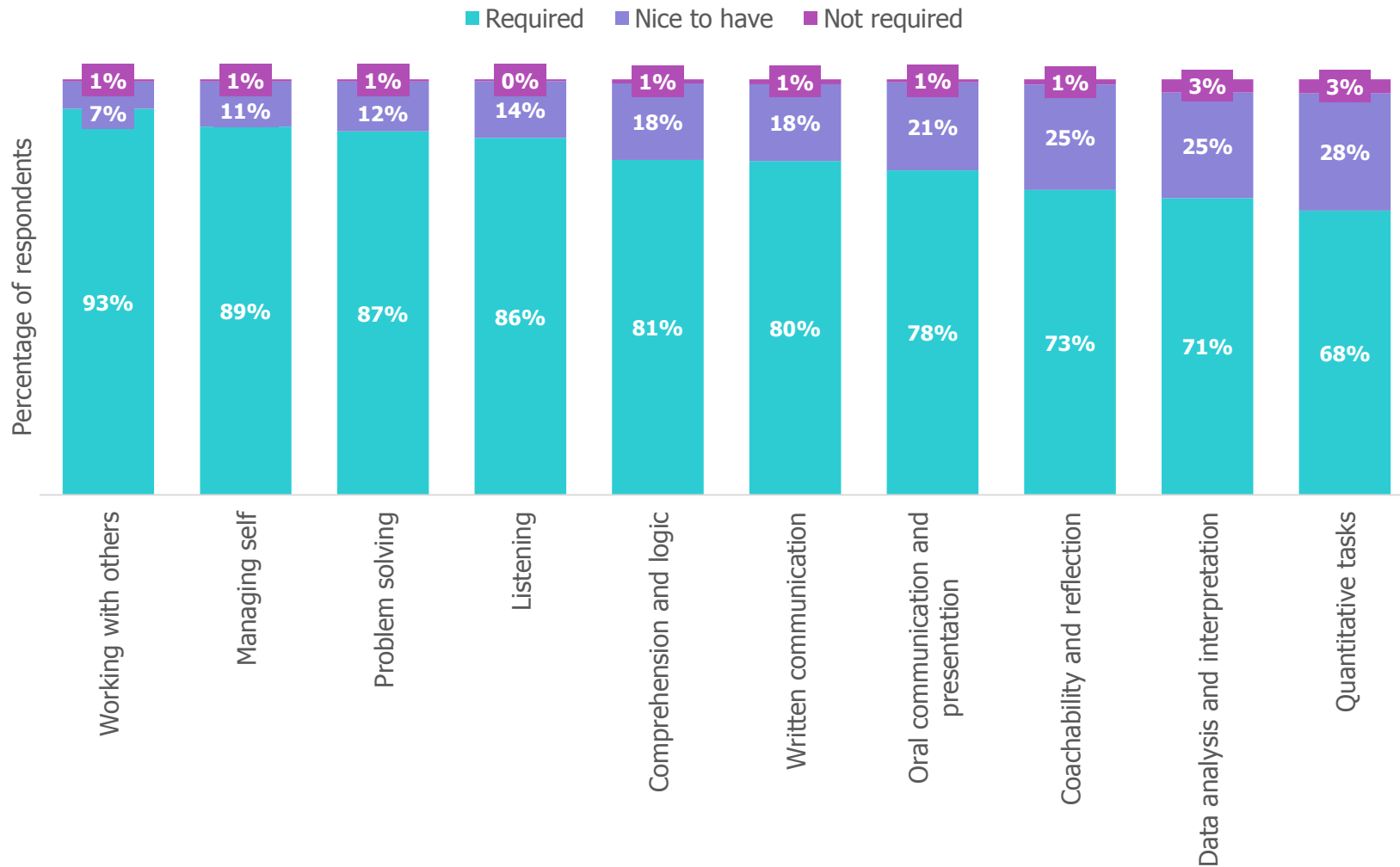
- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Data analysis/interpretation

General Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)

Employers were asked to indicate their company's need for a particular skill and if the skill is easy or difficult to find among recent business school graduates. The list of ten general knowledge, skills, and abilities and their definitions presented to each recruiter are as follows:

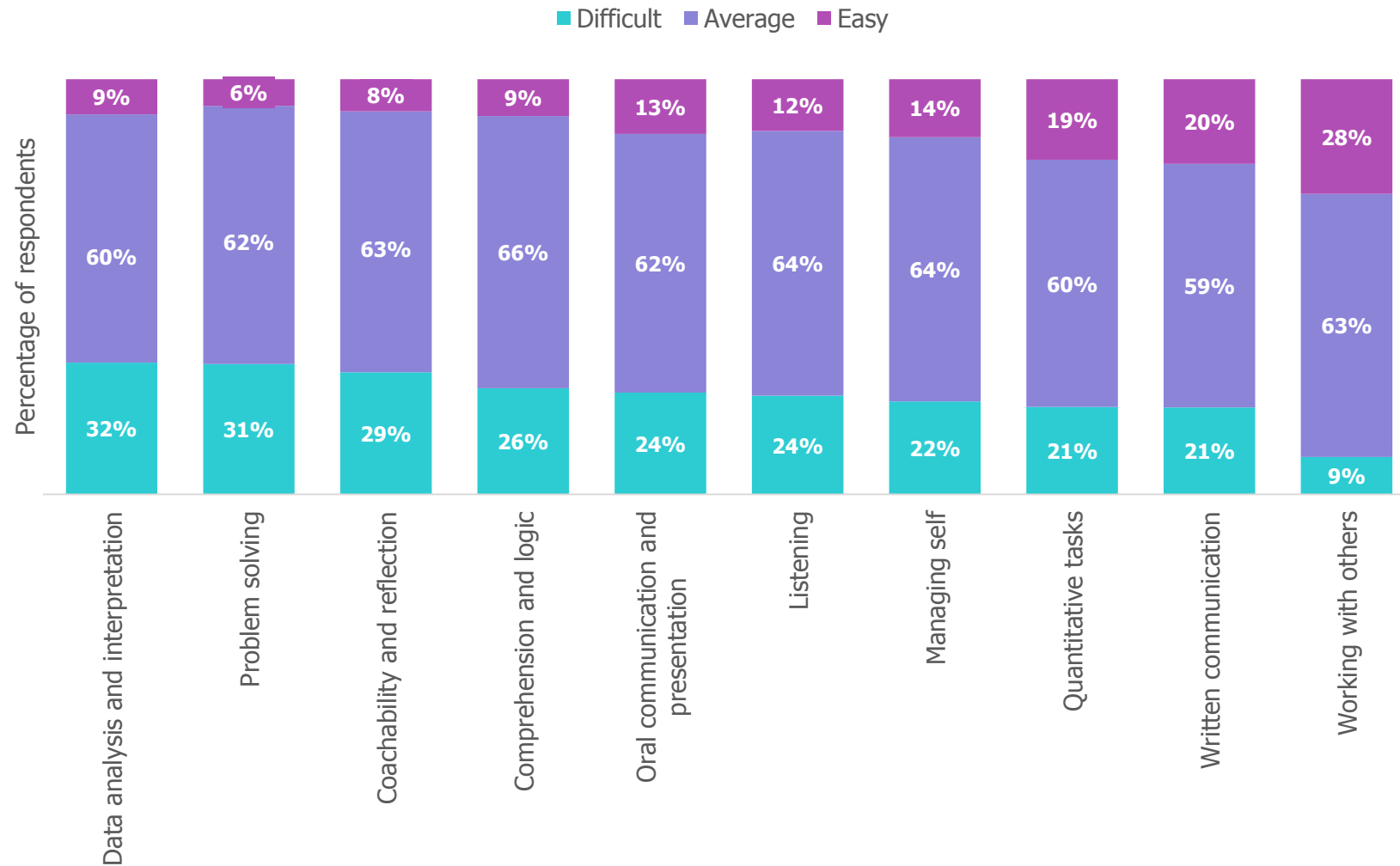
- **Problem solving** – The ability to find solutions to difficult or complex problems
- **Quantitative tasks** – Comfortability working with numerical data
- **Data analysis and interpretation** – The ability to interpret and synthesize data to extract insights and meaning
- **Comprehension and logic** – The ability to apply critical and logical reasoning skills to evaluate arguments and draw conclusions
- **Listening** – The ability to extract key points and evaluate and analyze the logic of spoken arguments
- **Written communication** – The ability to produce structured writing that communicates ideas clearly and concisely
- **Oral communication and presentation** – The ability to effectively present and communicate quantitative and qualitative data
- **Managing self** – Behaves ethically and exerts the necessary effort and persistence to achieve goals and manage setbacks
- **Working with others** – The ability to work with others to achieve a common goal
- **Coachability and reflection** – The quality of being a reflective learner who is able to internalize and act upon feedback

Employers Most Often Say Working With Others and Self-Management Are Required Skills in Hiring Recent B-School Grads



Ability to Find Talent: General KSAs

Data Analysis and Interpretation and Problem Solving Are the Skills Employers Most Often Say Are Difficult to Find



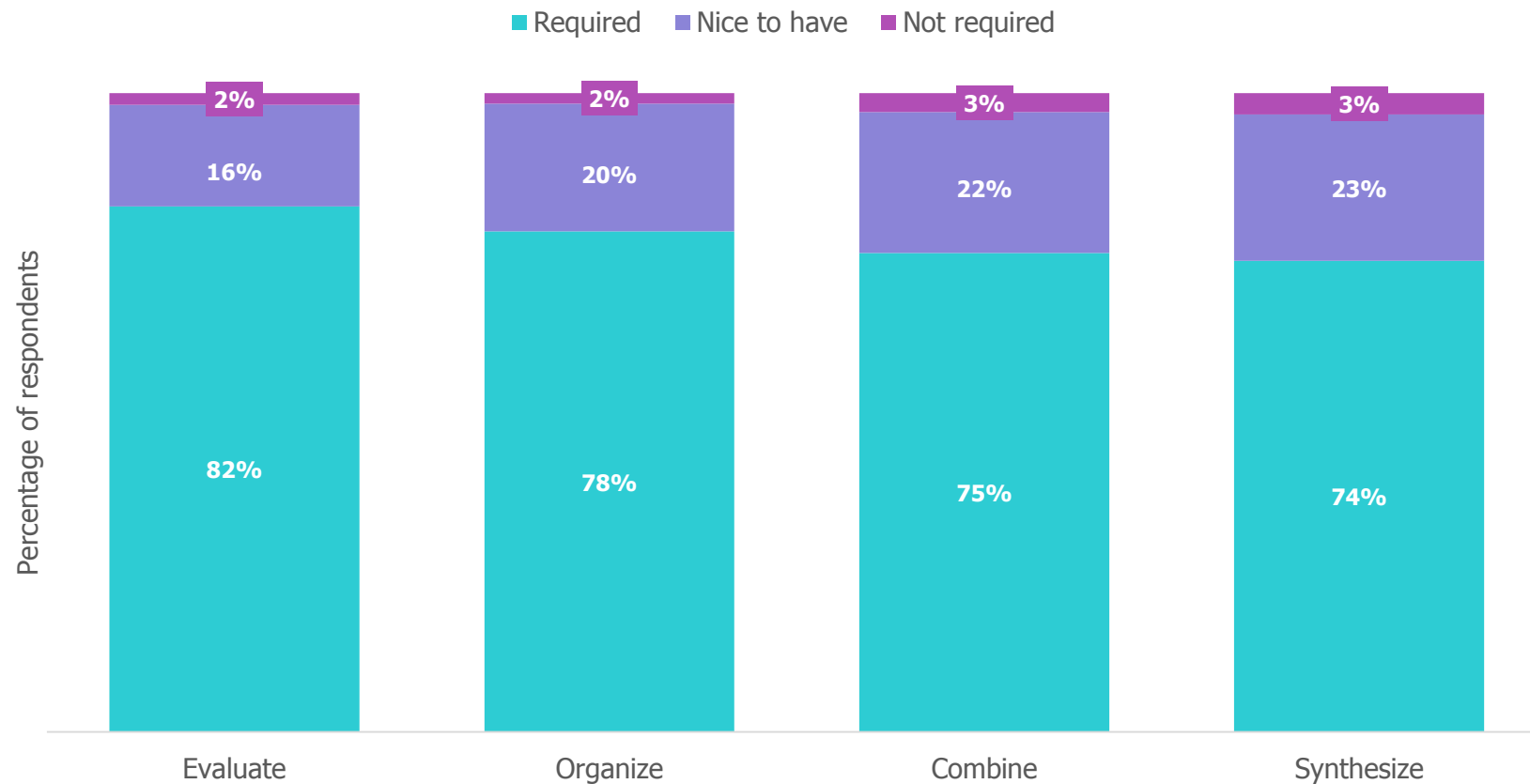
Integrated Reasoning (IR) Skills

Employers were asked to indicate their company's need for a particular skill and if the skill is easy or difficult to find among recent business school graduates. The list of four Integrated Reasoning skills and their definitions presented to each recruiter are as follows:

- **Synthesize** – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers
- **Evaluate** – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources
- **Organize** – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems
- **Combine** – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Company Need: Integrated Reasoning (IR)

A Majority of Employers Require New Business School Hires to Have Integrated Reasoning Skills



Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

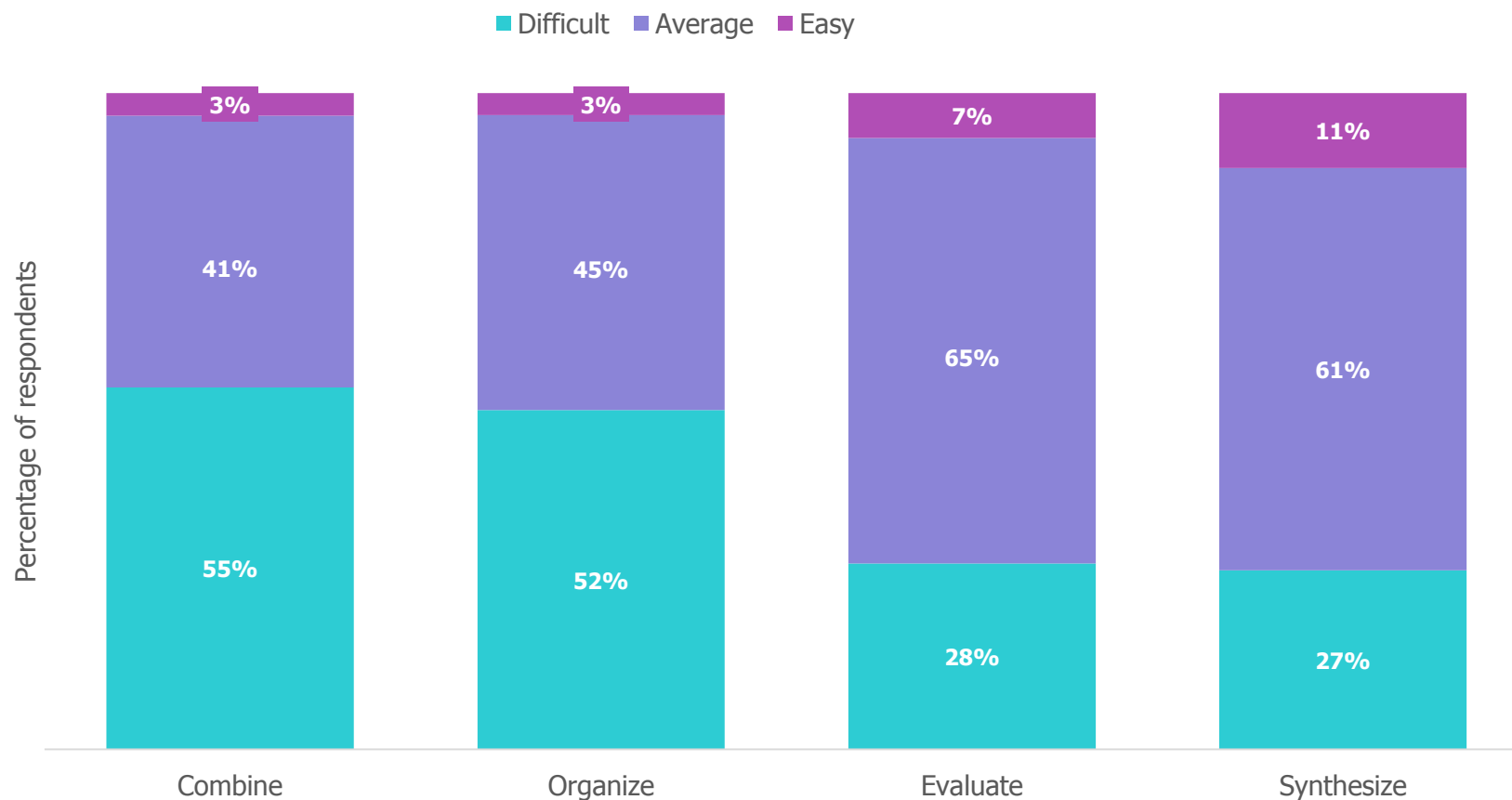
Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

Ability to Find Talent: Integrated Reasoning (IR)

More Than Half of Employers Say It Is Difficult to Find Business School Candidates With the IR Skills of Combine and Organize



Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

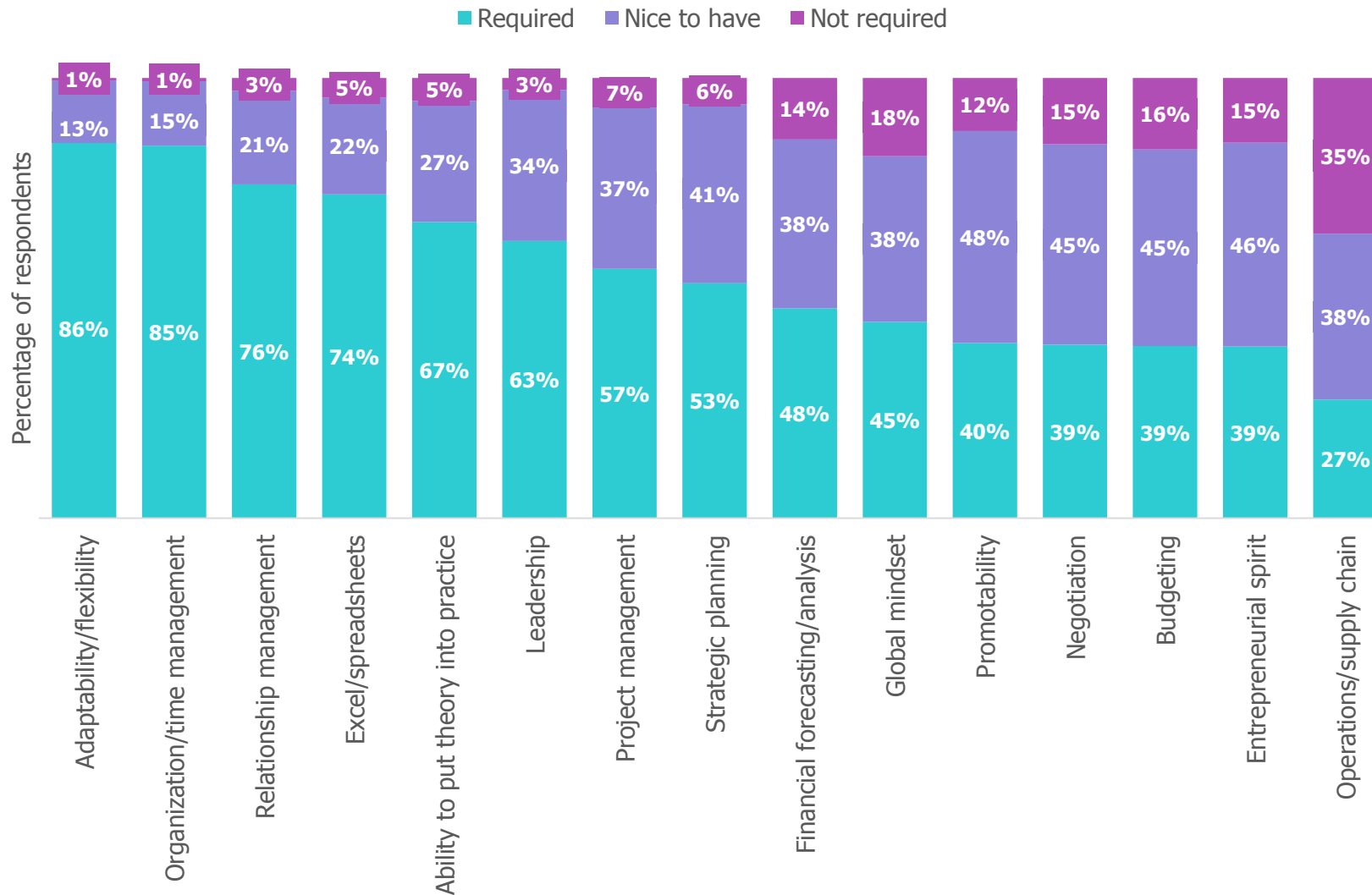
Specific Skills and Attributes

Employers were asked to indicate their company's need for a particular skill and if the skill is easy or difficult to find among recent business school graduates. The list of 15 specific skills and attributes presented to each recruiter are as follows:

- **Budgeting/budget management**
- **Excel/spreadsheets**
- **Negotiation**
- **Strategic planning**
- **Project management**
- **Entrepreneurial spirit**
- **Promotability**
- **Relationship management**
- **Financial forecasting/analysis**
- **Operations/Supply chain**
- **Global mindset**
- **Leadership**
- **Organization/Time management**
- **Adaptability/flexibility**
- **Ability to put theory into practice**

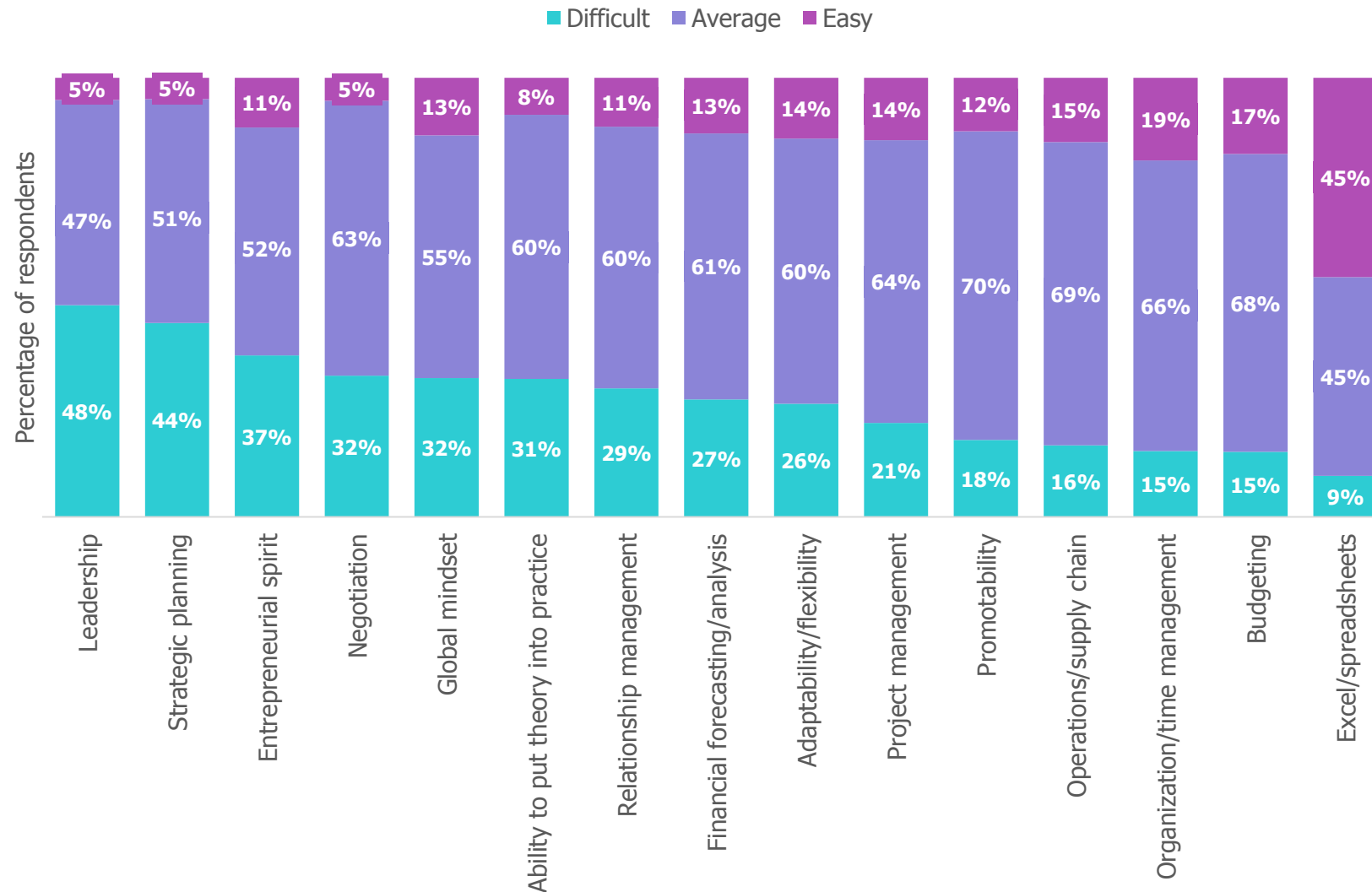
Company Need: Specific Skills/Attributes

More Than 8 in 10 Employers Require New B-School Hires to Be Adaptable/Flexible and Exhibit Time Management Skills



Ability to Find Talent: Specific Skills/Attributes

Nearly Half of Employers Say It Is Difficult to Find Recent B-School Grads With Leadership and Strategic Planning Skills



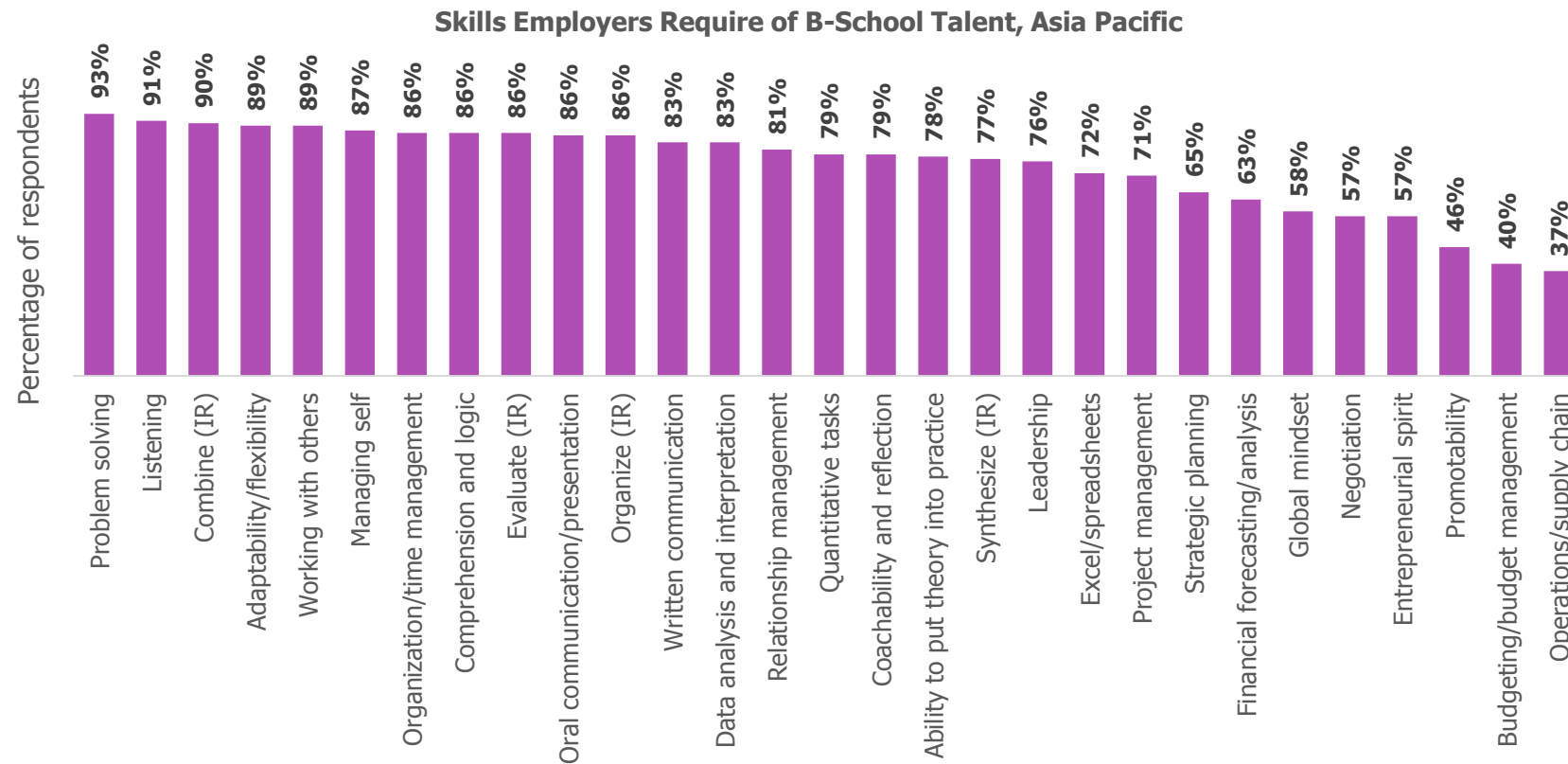
Regional Analysis

This section presents survey findings by company world region. Here, the 10 KSAs, four IR skills, and 15 specific skills and attributes are presented together.

For each world region, the following is displayed:

- **Skills Employers Require of B-School Talent** – The percentage of responding employers in a given world region who indicate a skill is required in hiring recent business school graduates
- **Skills Employers Require and Are Difficult to Find Among B-School Talent** – The percentage of responding employers in a given world region who indicate a skill is both required and difficult to find among recent business school graduates

Problem Solving, Listening, and the IR Skill of Combine Are the Most Frequently Required Skills Among Asia-Pacific Companies



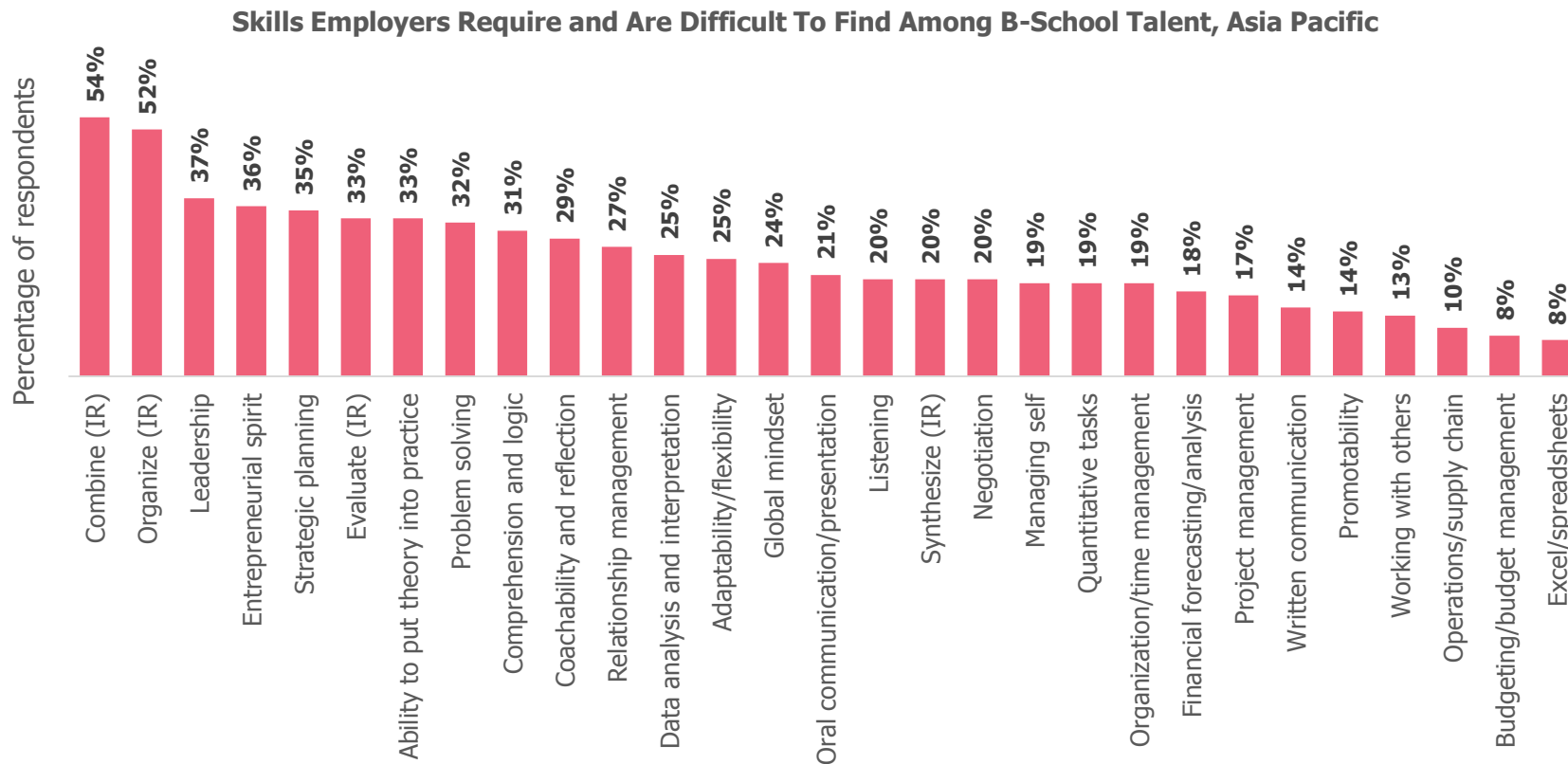
Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

Most Asia-Pacific Companies Require, But Have Difficulty Finding, B-School Talent With the IR Skills of Combine and Organize



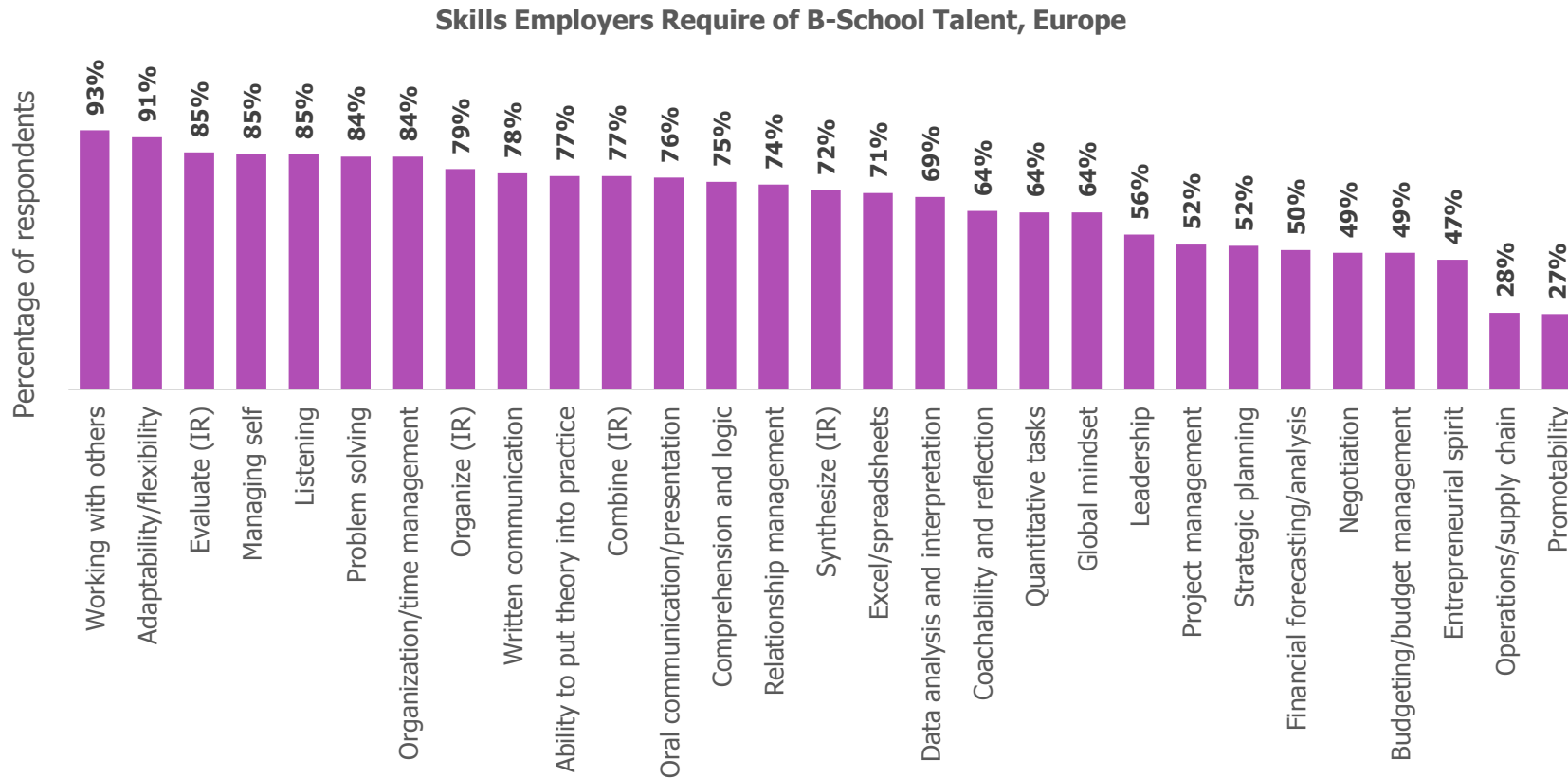
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Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

Working With Others, Adaptability, and the IR Skill of Evaluate Are the Most Frequently Required Skills Among European Companies



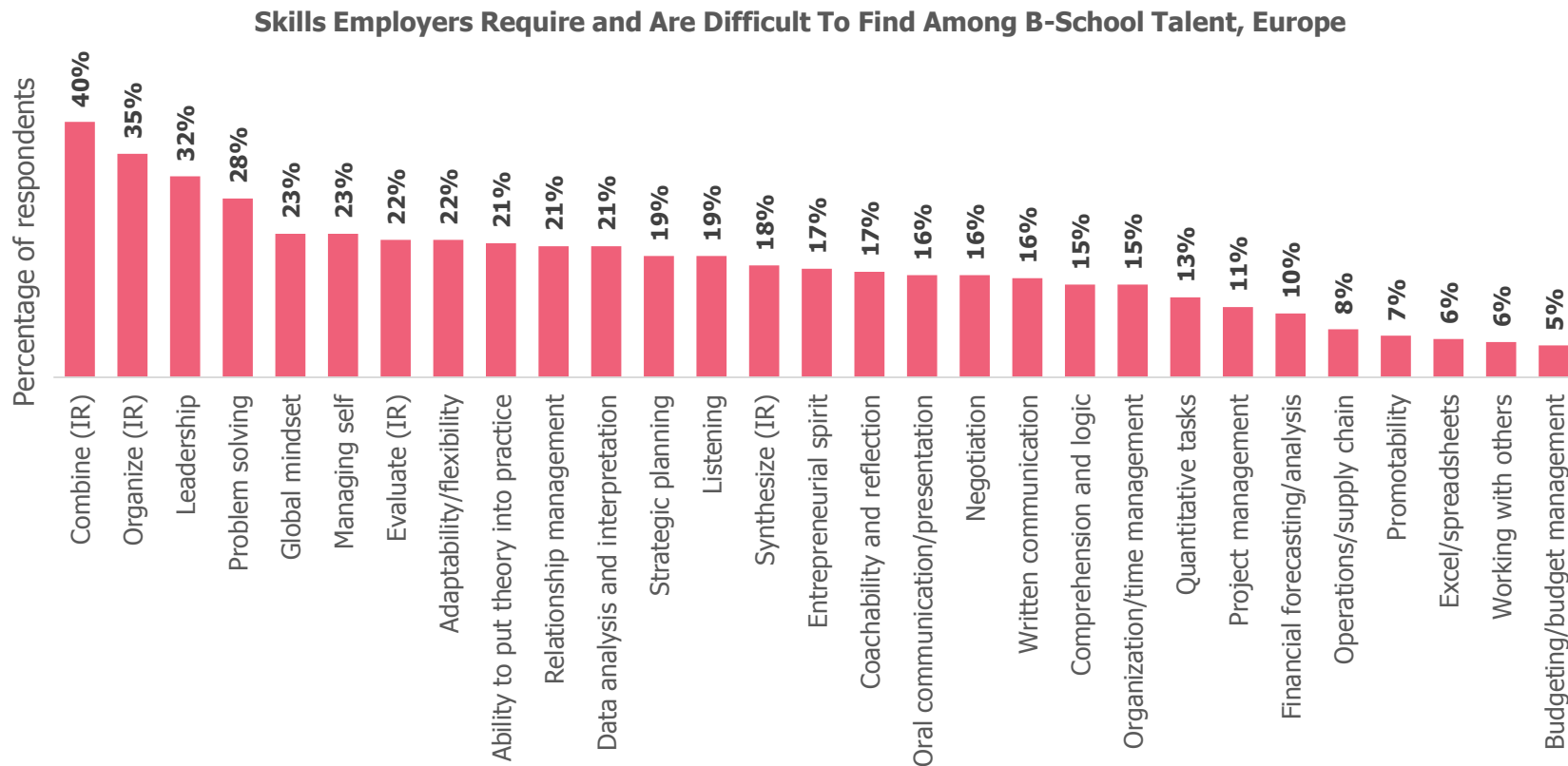
Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

Leadership and Problem Solving Are Frequently Required and Difficult to Find Skills for European Employers

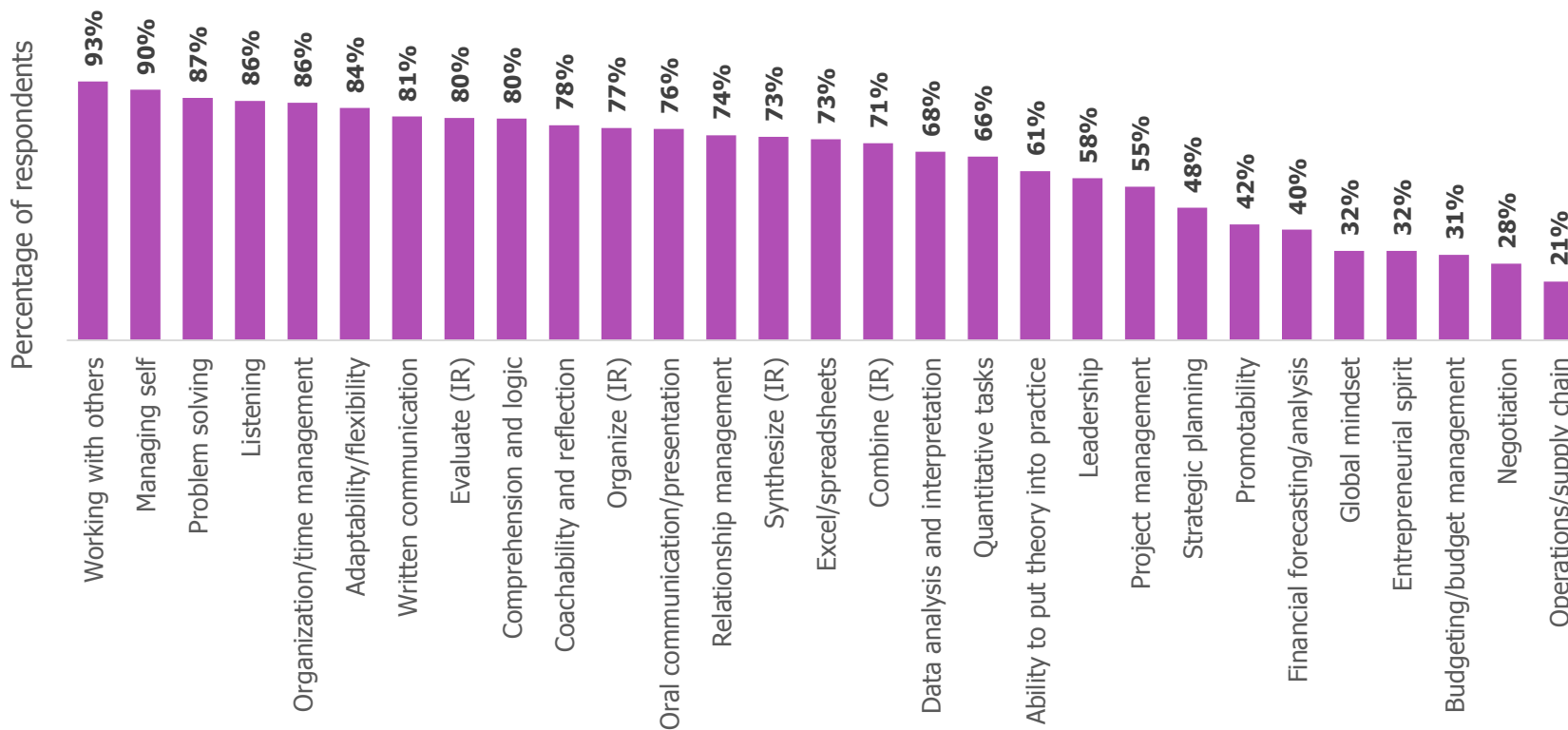


- Evaluate** – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources
- Organize** – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems
- Combine** – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems
- Synthesize** – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers



Working With Others, Self-Management, and Problem Solving Are the Most Frequently Required Skills Among US Companies

Skills Employers Require of B-School Talent, United States



Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

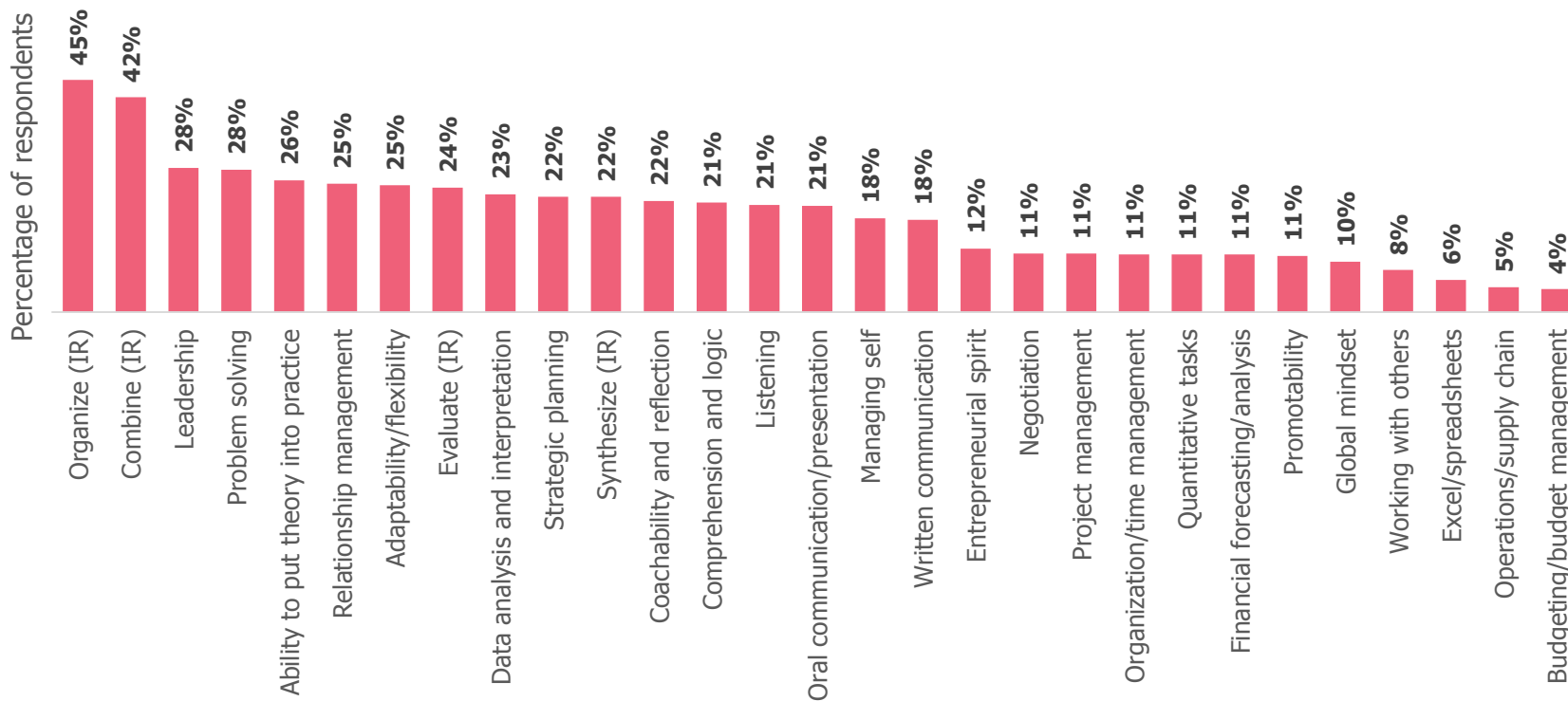
Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

A Quarter of US Companies Require, But Have Difficulty Finding, B-School Talent With Leadership and Problem Solving Skills

Skills Employers Require and Are Difficult To Find Among B-School Talent, United States



Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

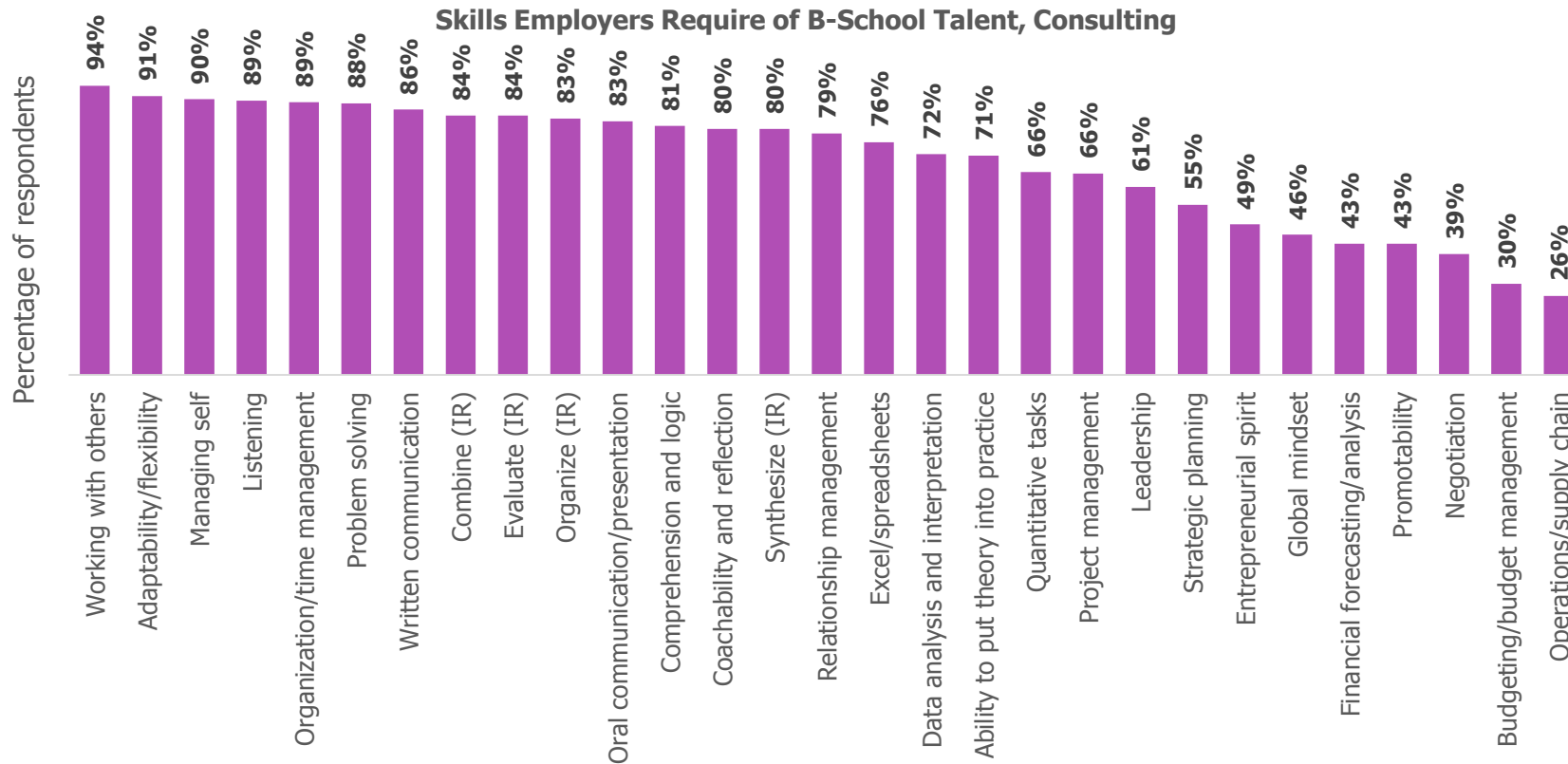
Industry Analysis

This section presents survey findings by company industry. Here, the 10 KSAs, four IR skills, and 15 specific skills and attributes are presented together.

For each industry, the following is displayed:

- **Skills Employers Require of B-School Talent** – The percentage of responding employers in a given industry who indicate a skill is required in hiring recent business school graduates
- **Skills Employers Require and Are Difficult to Find Among B-School Talent** – The percentage of responding employers in a given industry who indicate a skill is both required and difficult to find among recent business school graduates

Nine in 10 Consulting Firms Require New B-School Hires To Be Able to Work With Others, Be Adaptable, and Self-Manage



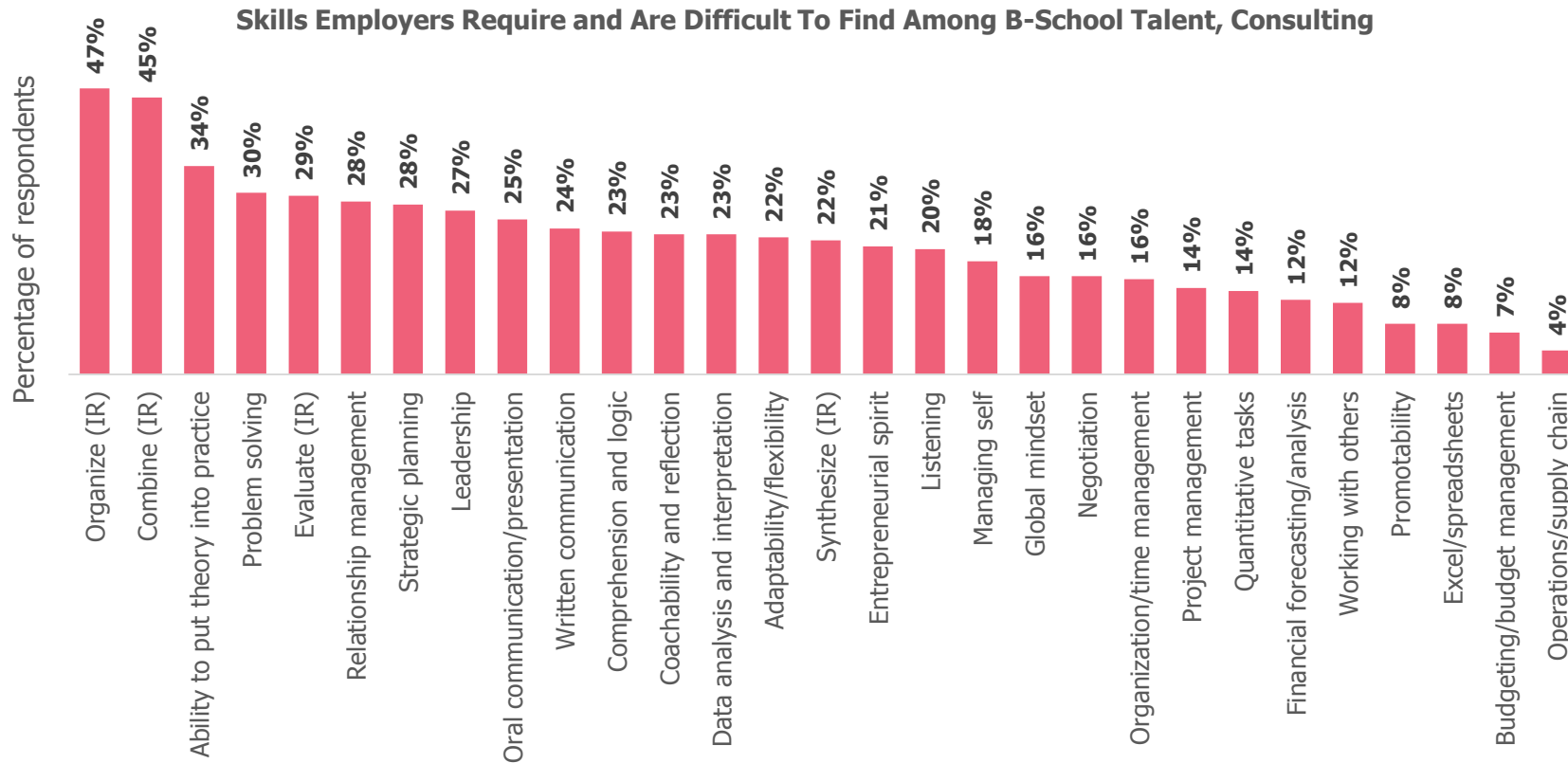
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Graduates With the Ability to Put Theory Into Practice and Problem Solve Are Difficult to Find for Consulting Firms



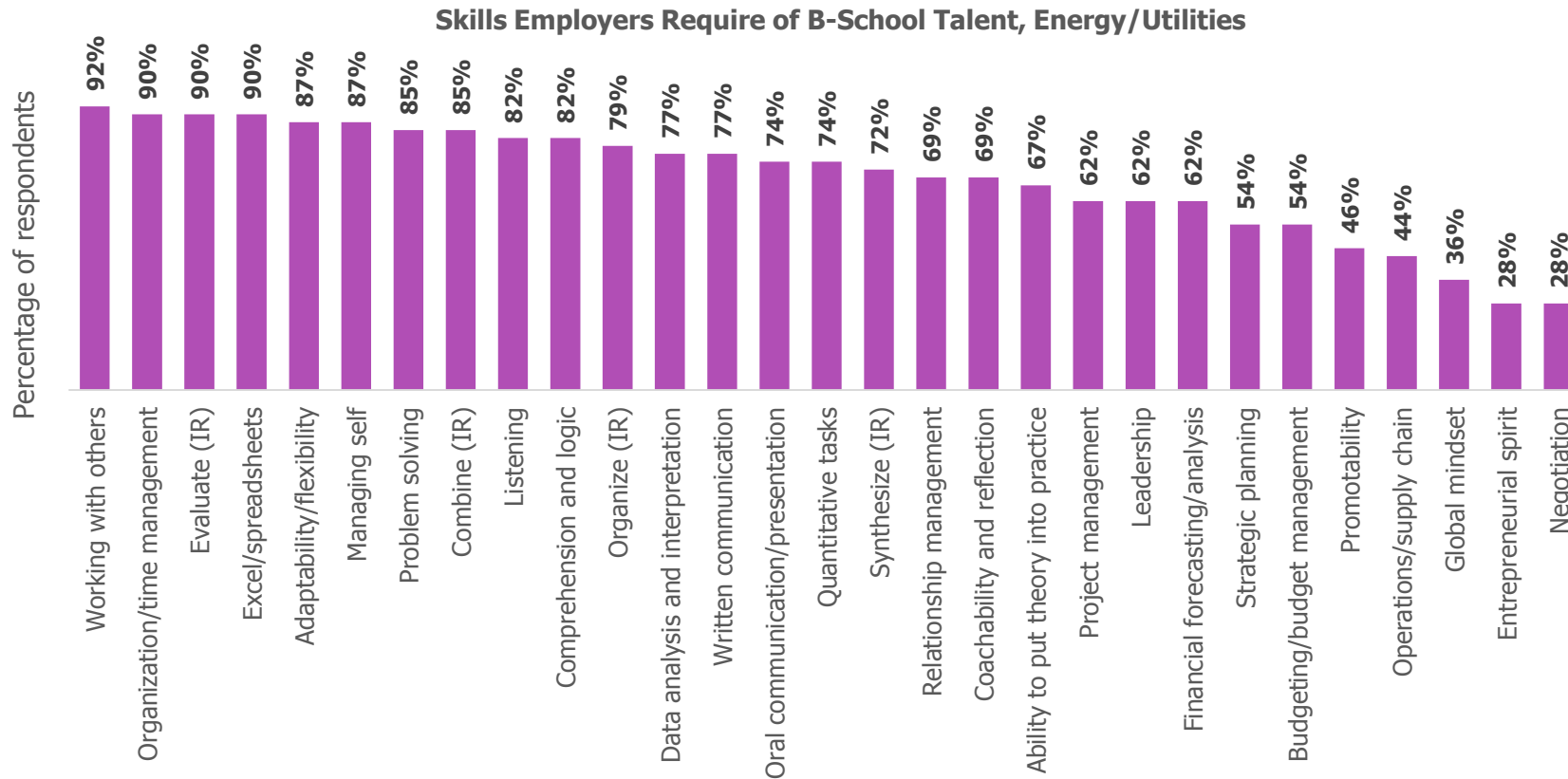
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Energy/Utilities Companies Most Often Require New B-School Hires to Work With Others and Have Time Management Skills



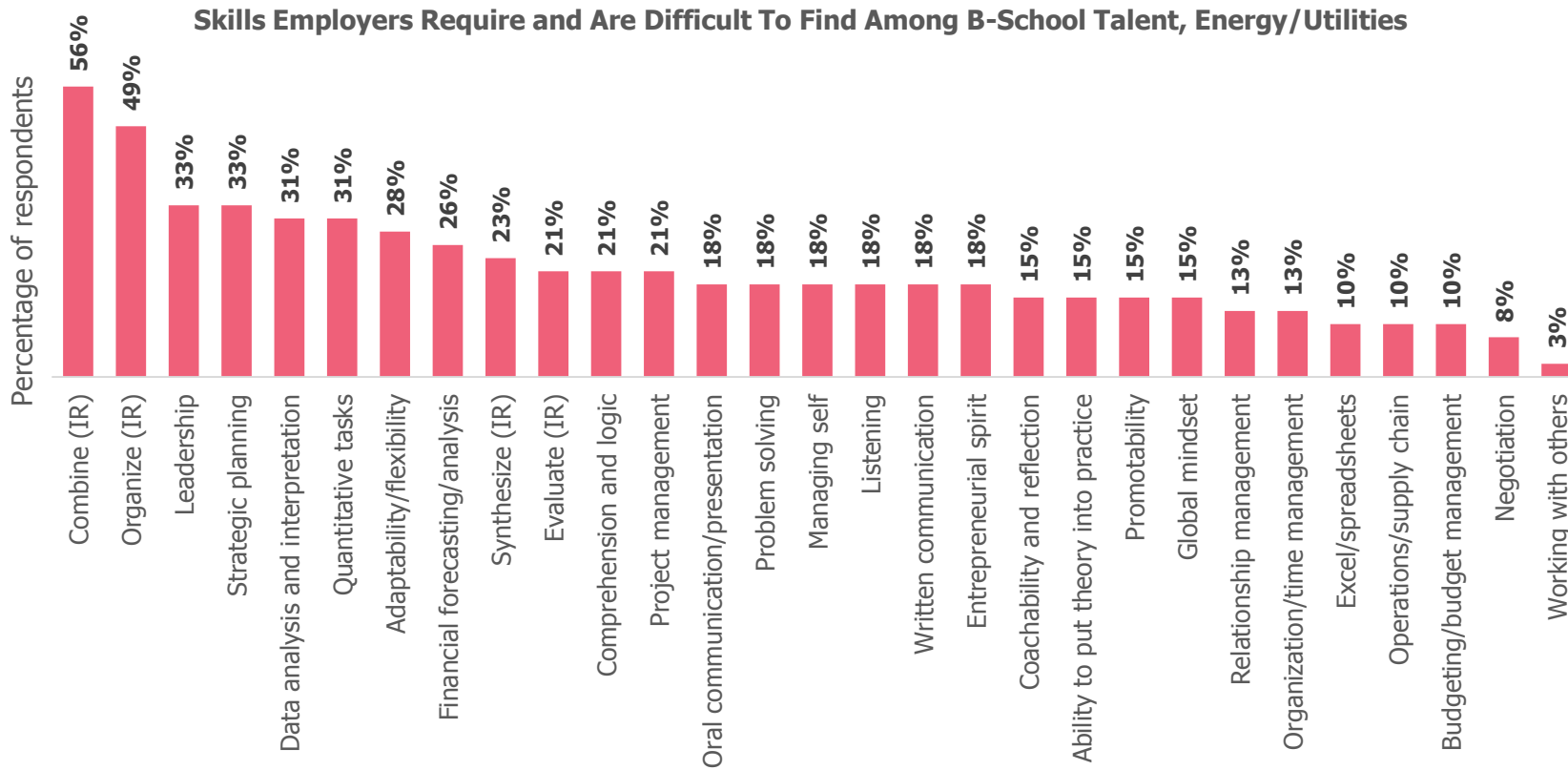
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Energy Firms Report Difficulty Finding Talent With Leadership, Strategic Planning, and Data Analysis and Interpretation Skills



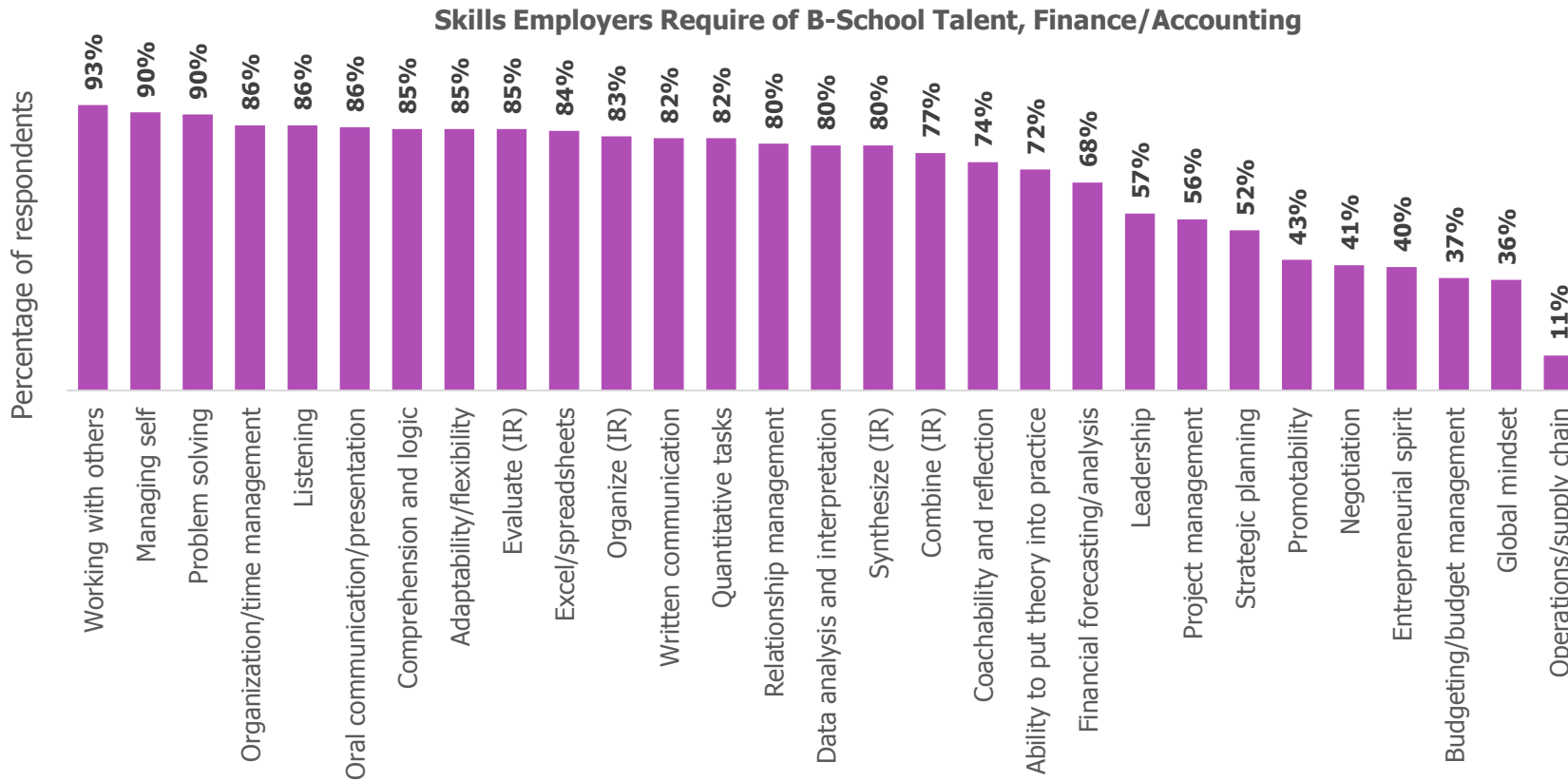
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Nine in 10 Financial Firms Require B-School Graduates to Work With Others, Self-Manage, and Have Problem Solving Skills



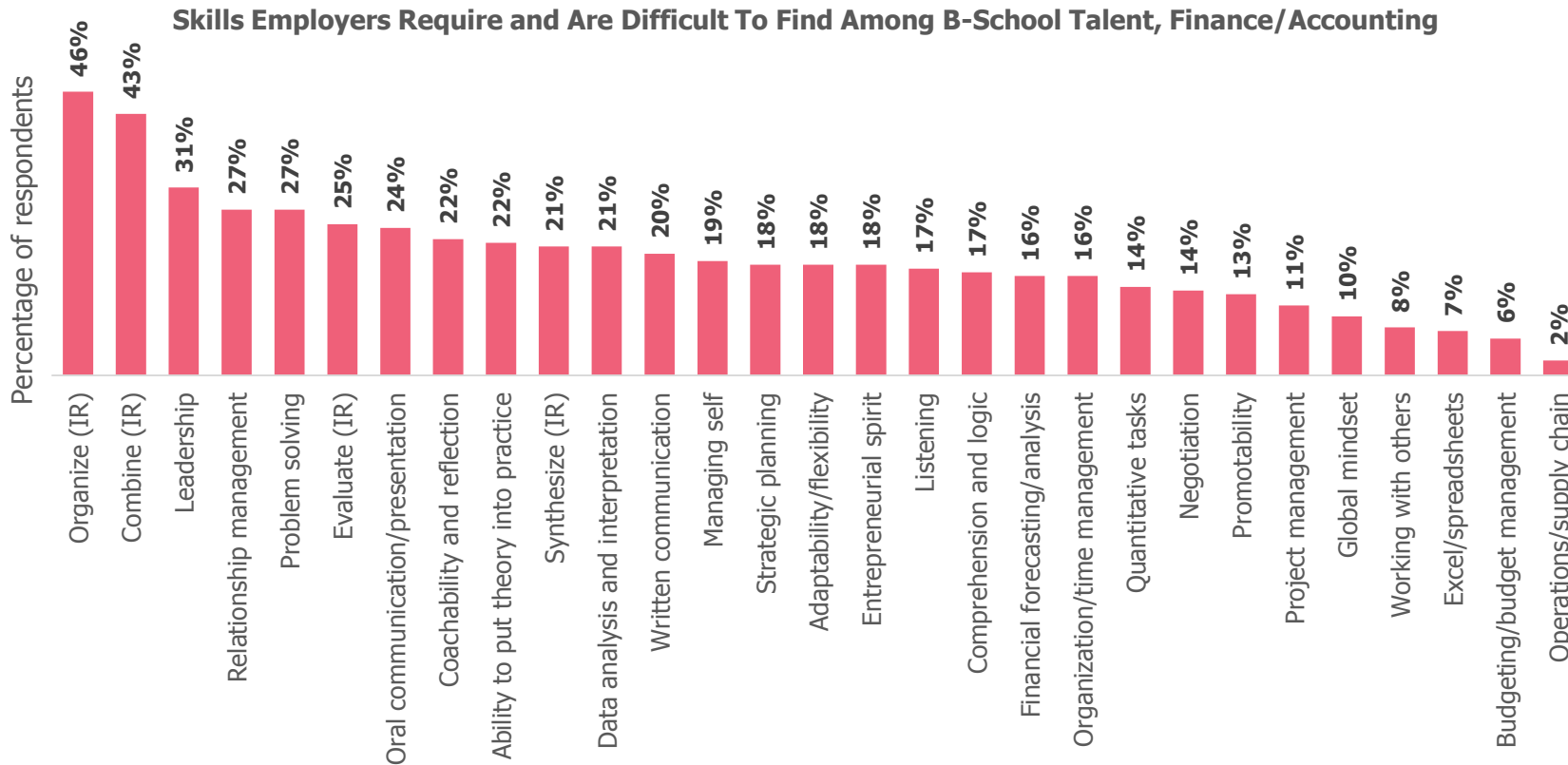
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Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

Graduates With Leadership and Relationship Management Skills Are Difficult for Finance/Accounting Firms to Find



Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

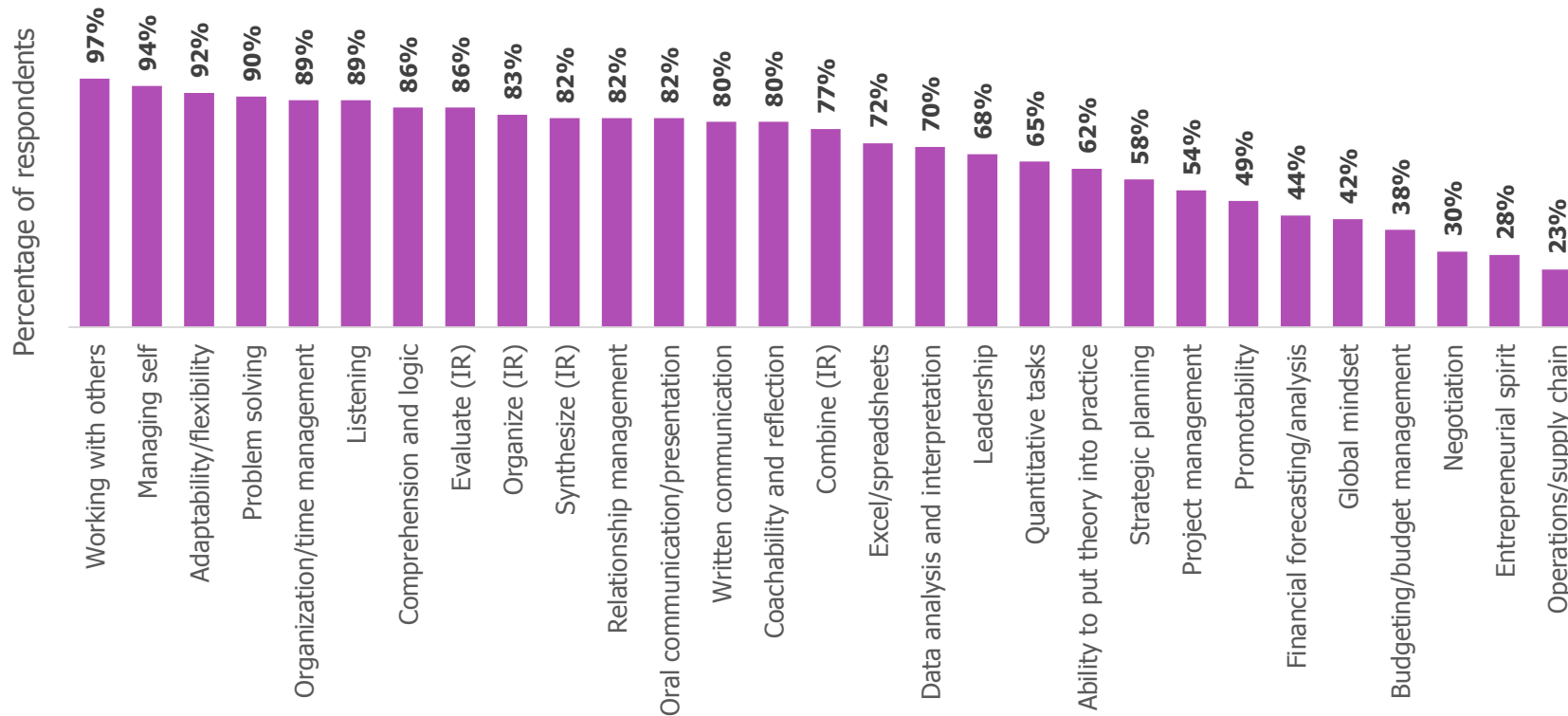
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B-School Graduates Hired Into Health Care Companies Are Most Often Required to Work With Others and Self-Manage

Skills Employers Require of B-School Talent, Health Care



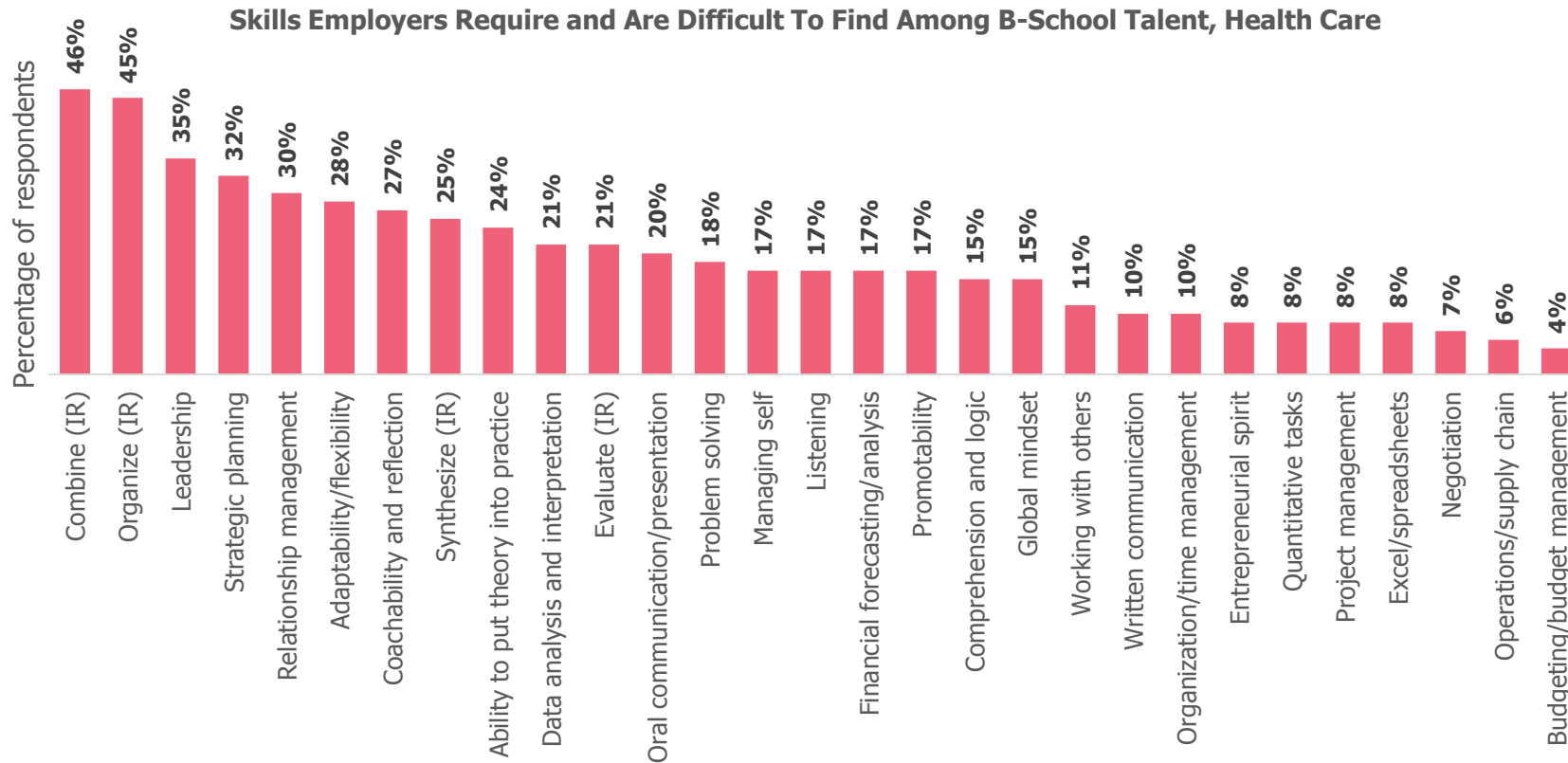
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Healthcare Companies Report Difficulty Finding Talent With Leadership, Strategic Planning, and Relationship Management Skills



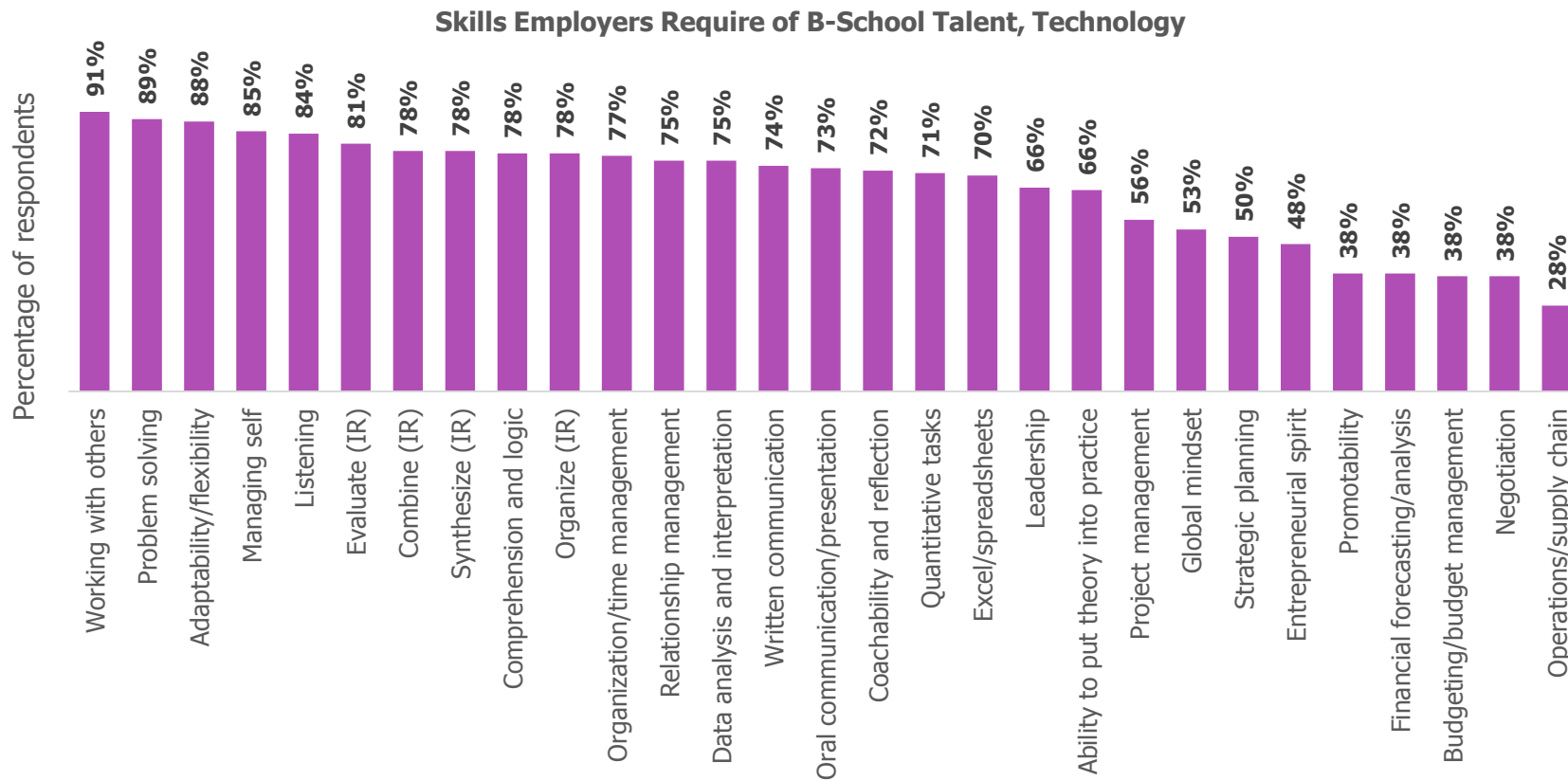
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Tech Firms Most Often Require B-School Hires to Work With Others, Problem Solve, and Be Adaptable



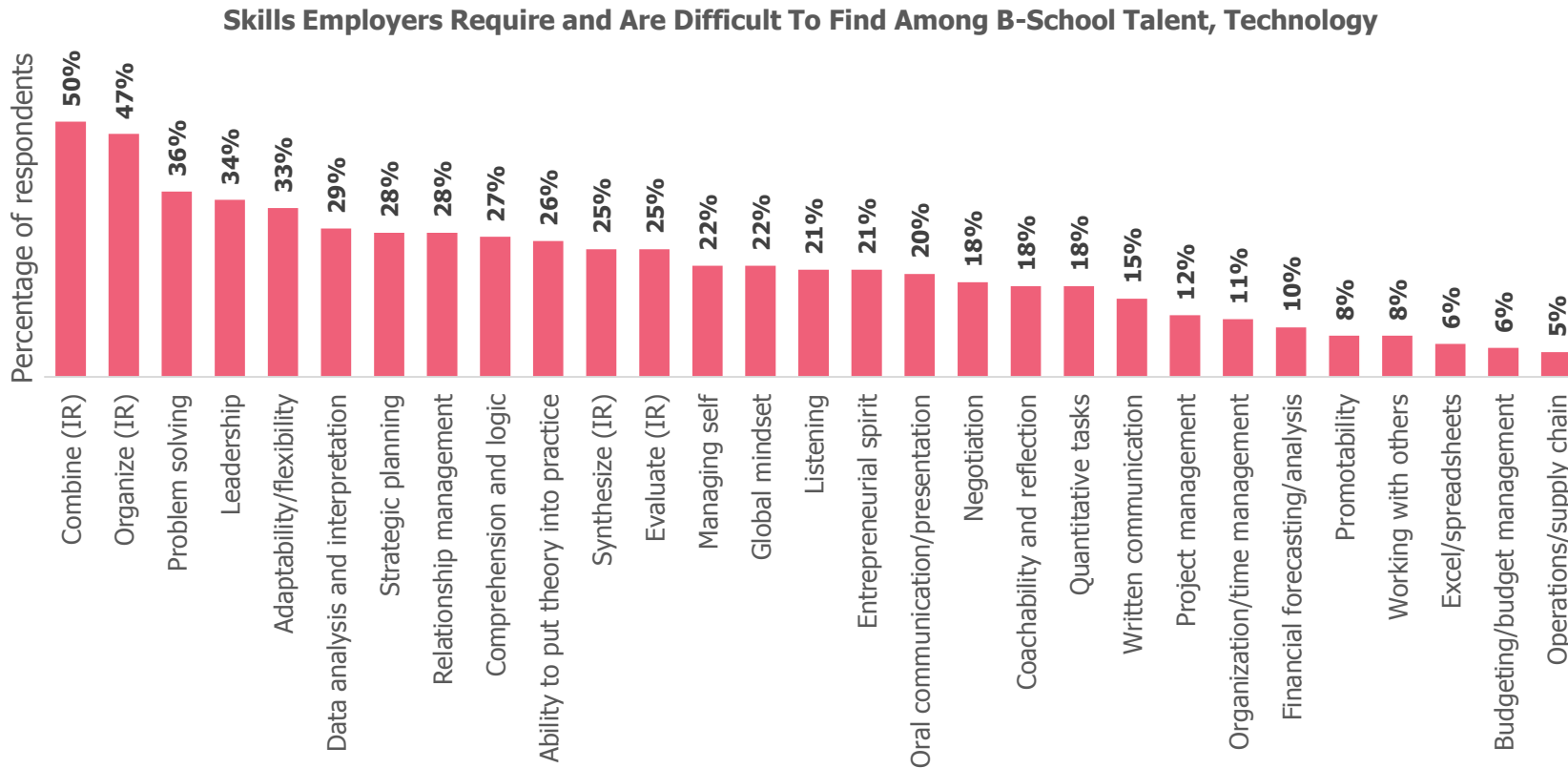
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Tech Firms Often Require, But Have Difficulty Finding, B-School Talent With Problem Solving and Leadership Skills



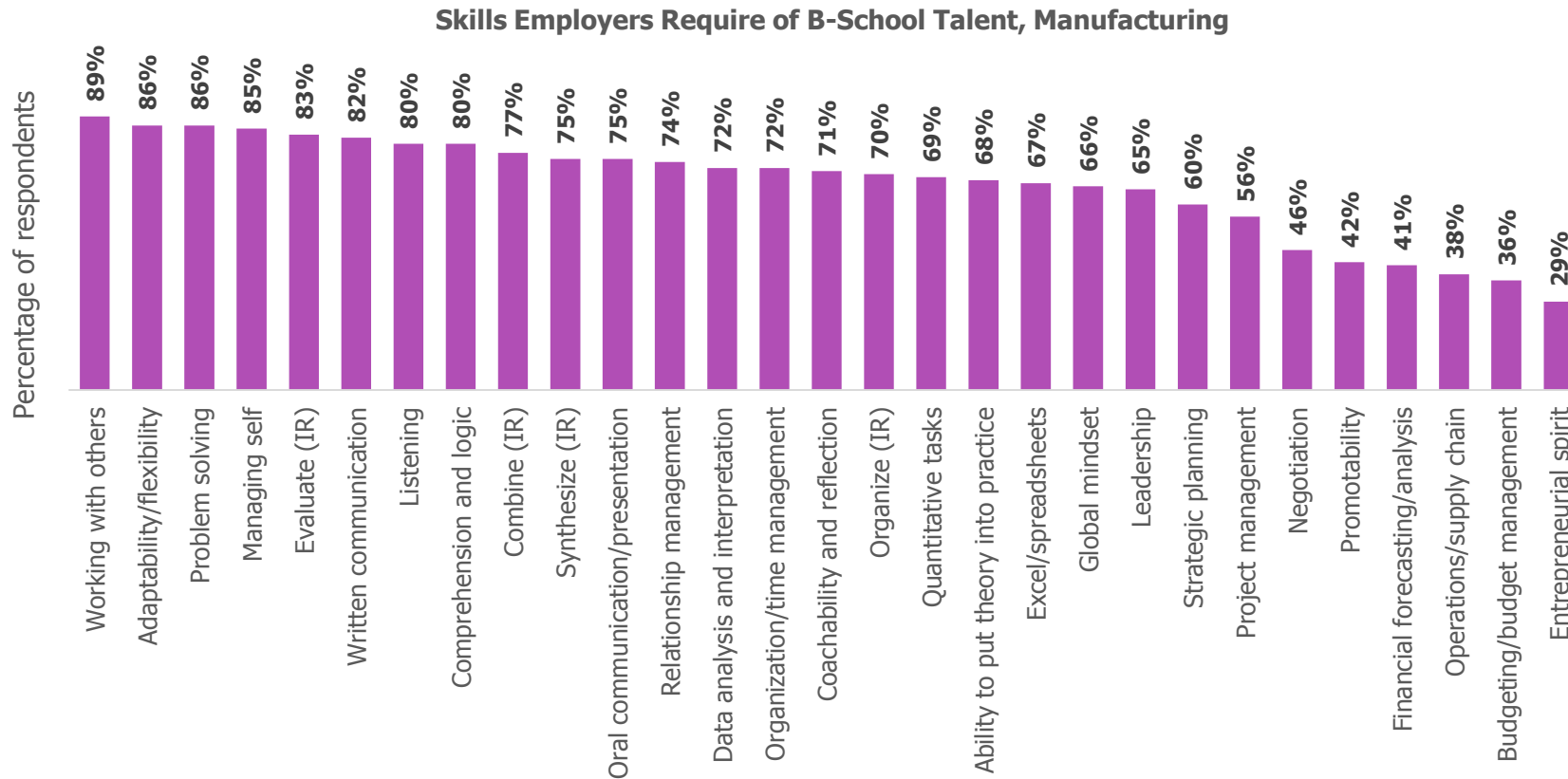
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B-School Graduates Hired in Manufacturing Are Most Often Required to Work With Others, Be Adaptable, and Problem Solve



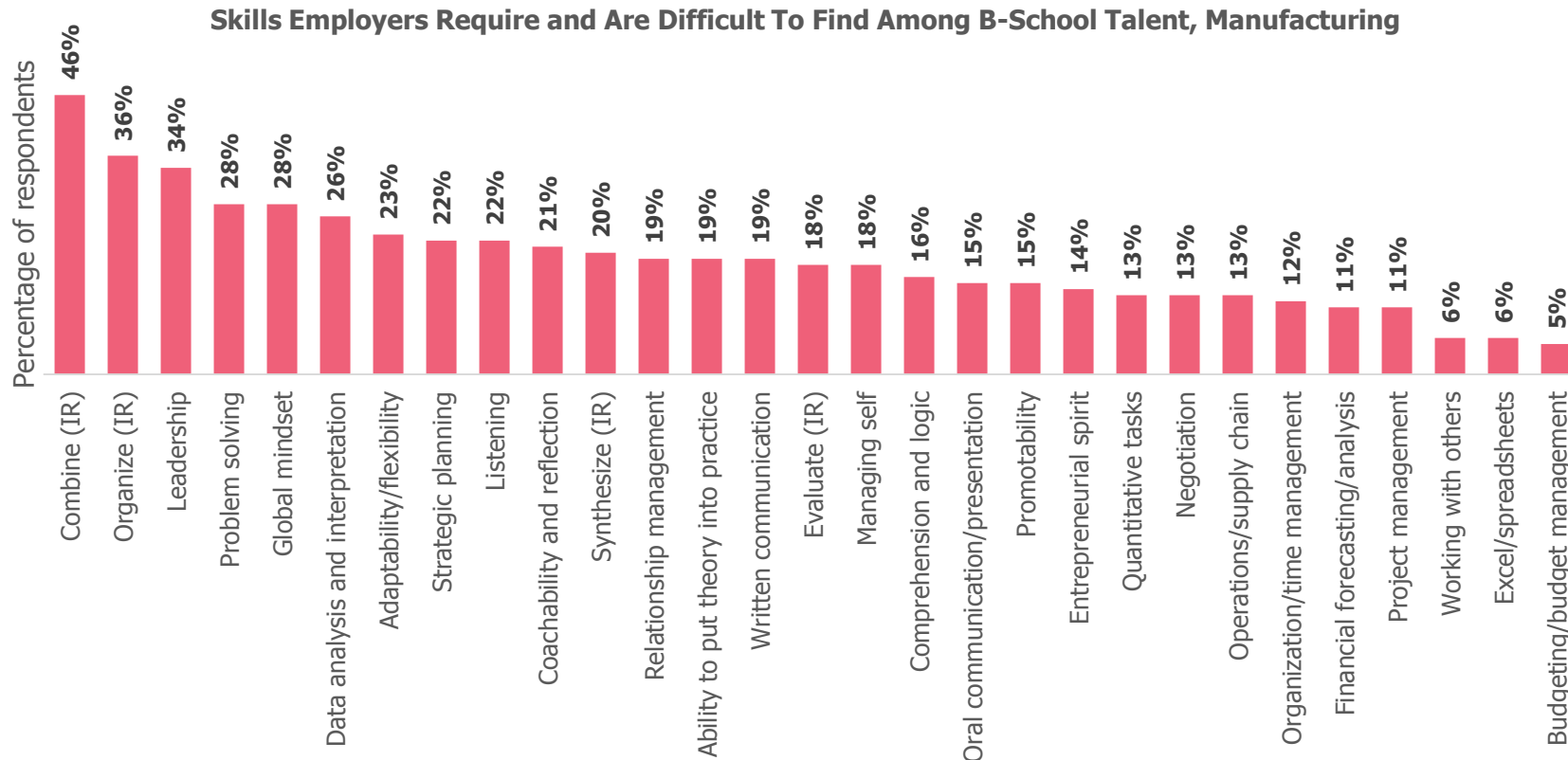
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Organize – The ability to organize information to see relationships and to solve multiple, interrelated problems

Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

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Graduates With Leadership and Problem Solving Skills Are Difficult for Manufacturing Companies to Find



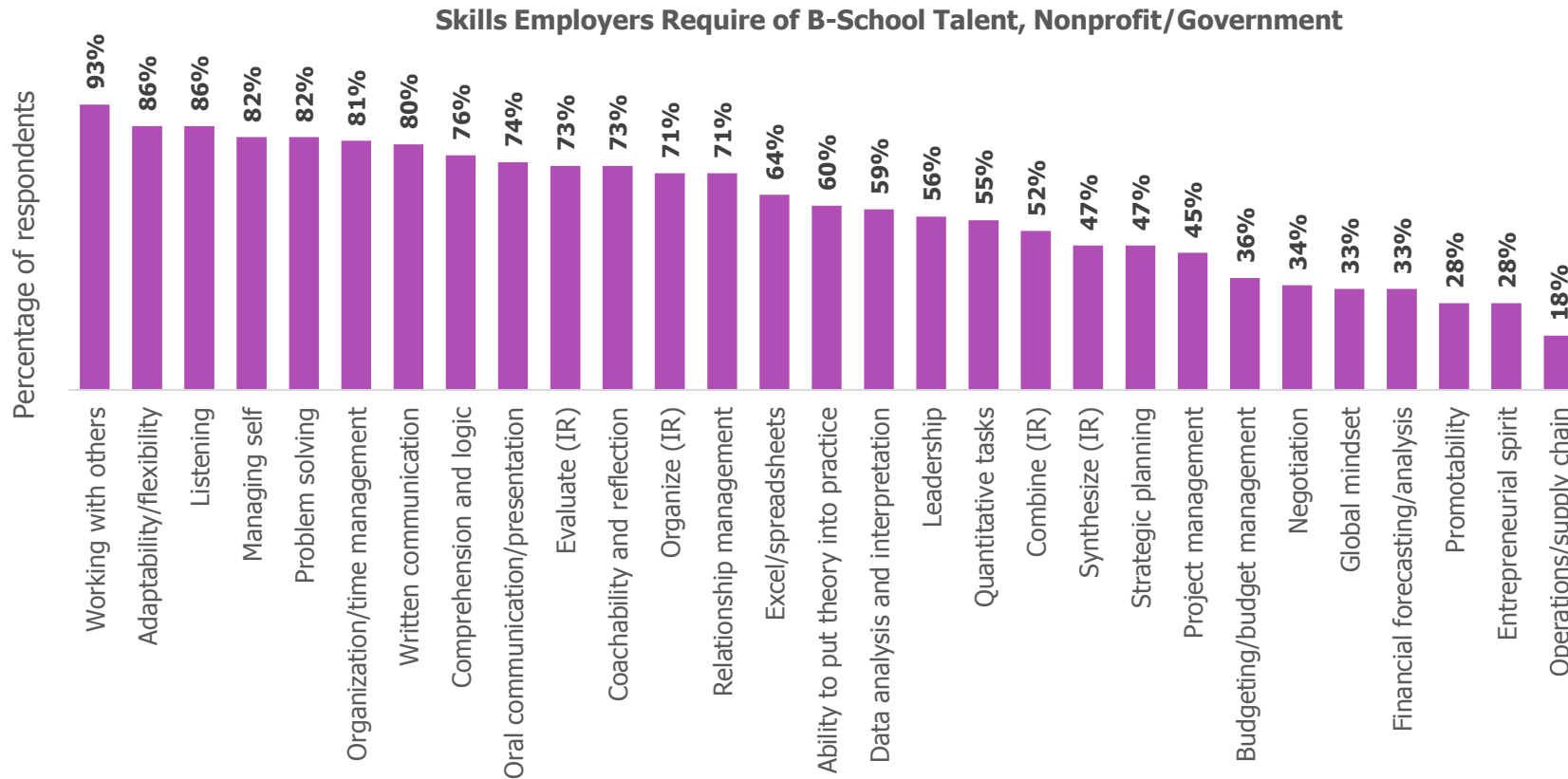
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Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

B-School Graduates in Nonprofit/Gov't Are Most Often Required to Work With Others, Be Adaptable, and Have Listening Skills



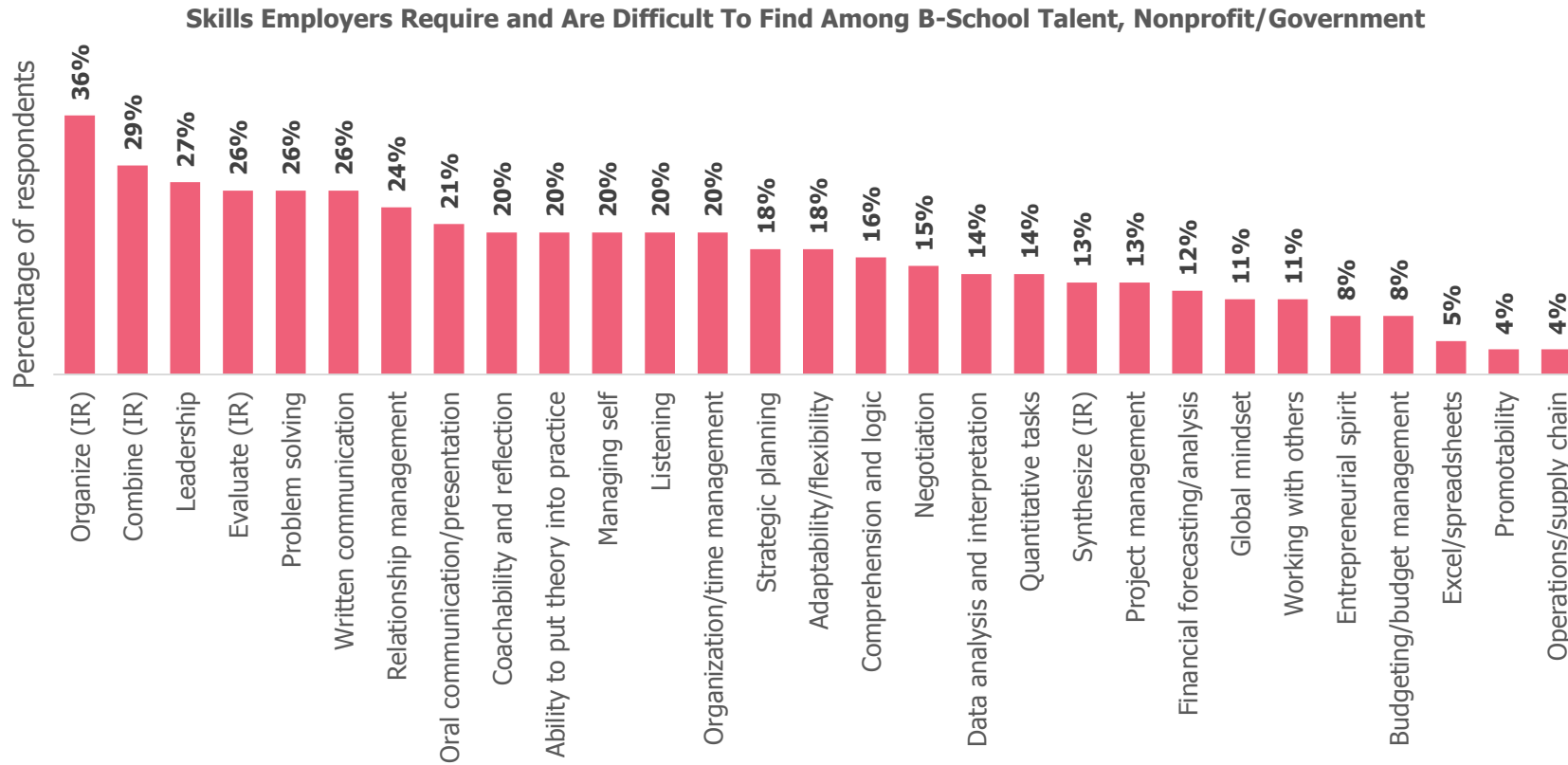
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Synthesize – The ability to synthesize information presented in graphics, text, and numbers

Nonprofit/Gov't Employers Report Difficulty Finding Talent With Leadership, Evaluation, and Problem Solving Skills



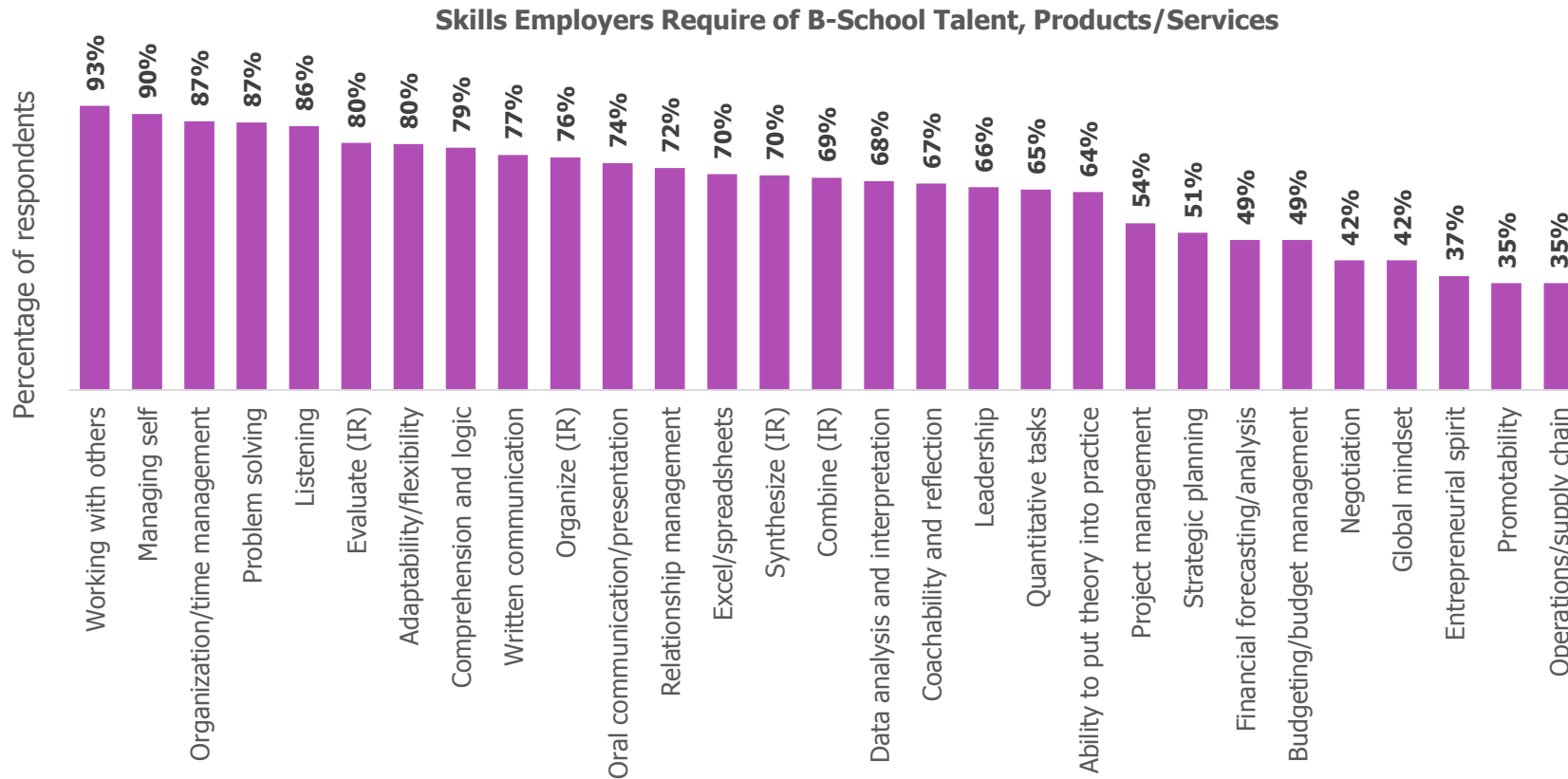
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Products/Services Companies Most Often Require Recent B-School Grads to Work With Others and Self-Manage



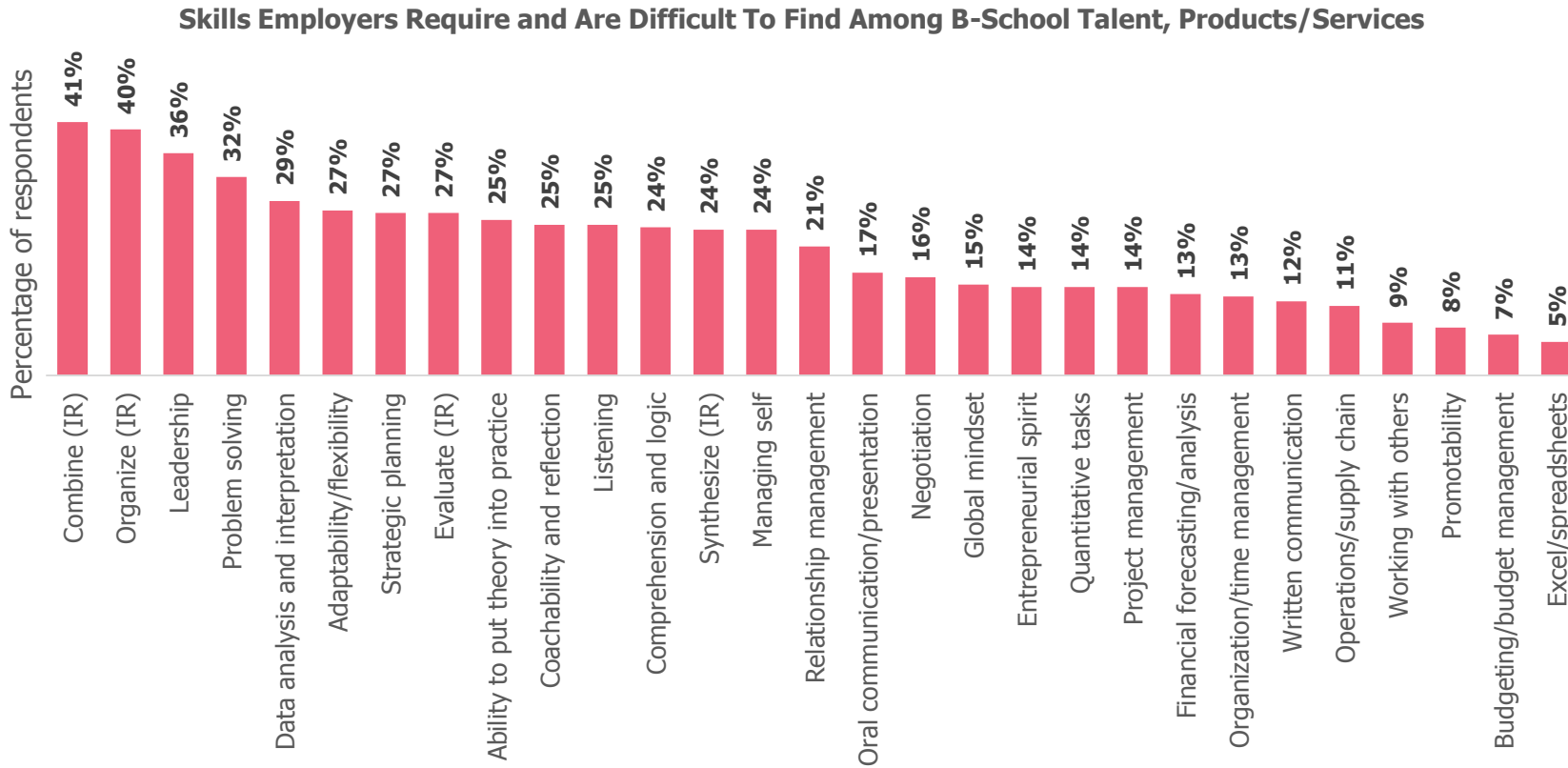
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Product/Services Companies Report Difficulty Finding B-School Talent With Leadership and Problem Solving Skills



Evaluate – The ability to evaluate relevant information from different sources

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Combine – The ability to combine and manipulate information from multiple sources to solve complex problems

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Methodology, Respondent Profile, and Contact Information

Methodology

The main findings in this report are based upon results of the 2018 Corporate Recruiters Survey, GMAC's annual survey of employers who recruit from and hire MBA and other business master's graduates of business schools around the world.

This study does not represent a census of all employers of graduate business students worldwide, nor is it necessarily a representative sample of such employers. The readers should note that the terms "respondent," "employer," and "company" are used interchangeably in this report and refer to survey respondents.

GMAC conducted this survey in consultation with associates from EFMD and MBA Career Services and Employer Alliance (MBA CSEA) between February 8 and March 17, 2018. These organizations recruited 96 business schools worldwide who then created a sample framework of employers who recruit MBA and business master's students. RelishMBA also assisted with recruitment of survey participants.

A total of 1,066 employers located in 42 countries worldwide responded to the survey, including adequate sample sizes to report details for Asia Pacific*, Europe, and the United States.

*For purposes of this report, Asia Pacific includes East and Southeast Asia, Central and South Asia, and Australia and Pacific Islands.

Regional Locations of Survey Respondents

Asia Pacific: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand.

Canada: Canada

Europe: Albania, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Latin America: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela.

Middle East & Africa: Kenya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and United Arab Emirates.

United States: United States

Respondent Characteristics

Demographic Profile of Corporate Recruiters Survey Respondents, 2018

N = 1,066			
World Region	Percentage	Company Type	Percentage*
Africa/Middle East	2%	Fortune Global 500	17%
Canada	2%	Fortune Global 100	20%
Central and South Asia	6%	Publicly traded	20%
East and Southeast Asia	5%	Start-up	8%
Europe	19%	Family-owned	13%
Latin America	8%	Industry	Percentage
United States	58%	Consulting	20%
Company Size	Percentage	Energy/Utilities	4%
Fewer than 100 employees	20%	Finance/Accounting	16%
100 to 999 employees	20%	Health care	7%
1,000 to 9,999 employees	20%	Technology	12%
10,000 or more employees	40%	Manufacturing	10%
		Nonprofit/Government	8%
		Products/Services	24%

*Percentages for company type do not sum to 100 due to none of the above option.

Contact Information

Contributors

The following individuals from the GMAC Research Department made significant contributions to the publication of this report: **Gregg Schoenfeld**, Senior Director, Research, questionnaire development, analysis and interpretation of data, and drafting of the manuscript for intellectual content; **Maryam Bastani**, Research Assistant, sample development, administrative work, manuscript review; **Tacoma Williams**, Research Senior Coordinator, quality assurance; **Matt Hazenbush**, Research Communications Senior Manager, manuscript review.

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- GMAC especially thanks the 96 business schools who facilitated this survey and the 1,066 employers who completed the questionnaire. Without your assistance and feedback this report would not have been possible.

For questions or comments regarding the study findings, methodology, or data, please contact the GMAC Research Department at:

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