



2026 RESEARCH REPORT

From Communication Craft to Digital Authority

Skill Requirements in LinkedIn Communication Job Advertisements at the Dawn of Generative AI

Hezron Ochiel

Hezron Insights | Nairobi, Kenya

64.2%

WRITING

The strongest skill signal

25.0%

SEARCH IN CONTENT

vs 1.5% in PR/public affairs

4.5%

AI + AUTOMATION

An early-2024 baseline

946

FINAL SAMPLE

Across five role families

HEZRON INSIGHTS

Actionable insights. Lasting impact.

Communication work is widening around a durable professional core.

The early-2024 labour-market signal is continuity with expansion: writing and human judgement remain central while analytics, search and AI add a wider digital layer.



writing & editing



leadership & collaboration



strategic communication



analytics & measurement

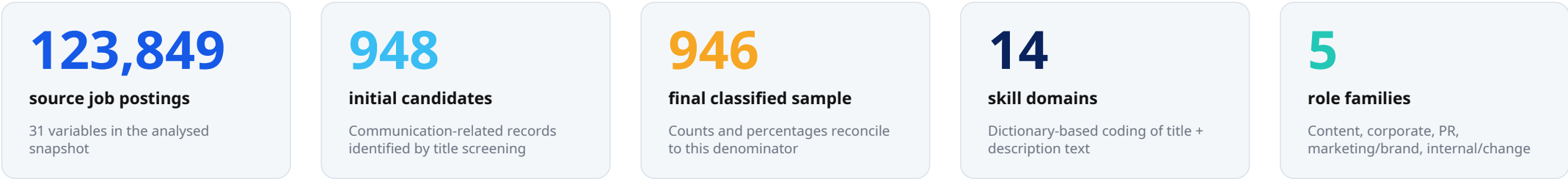
Core interpretation

The data do not show communication being replaced by technology. They show emerging digital capabilities being added to an established foundation of writing, strategy, research and relationships.



Study at a glance

A cross-sectional computational content analysis of communication-related LinkedIn job advertisements.



Analytical logic



Four questions shaped the analysis

The study moves from prevalence to occupational differences, emerging digital capabilities and conceptual synthesis.

01

Which skill domains were most frequently requested?

02

How did requirements vary across communication role families?

03

How visible were search, analytics, AI and automation?

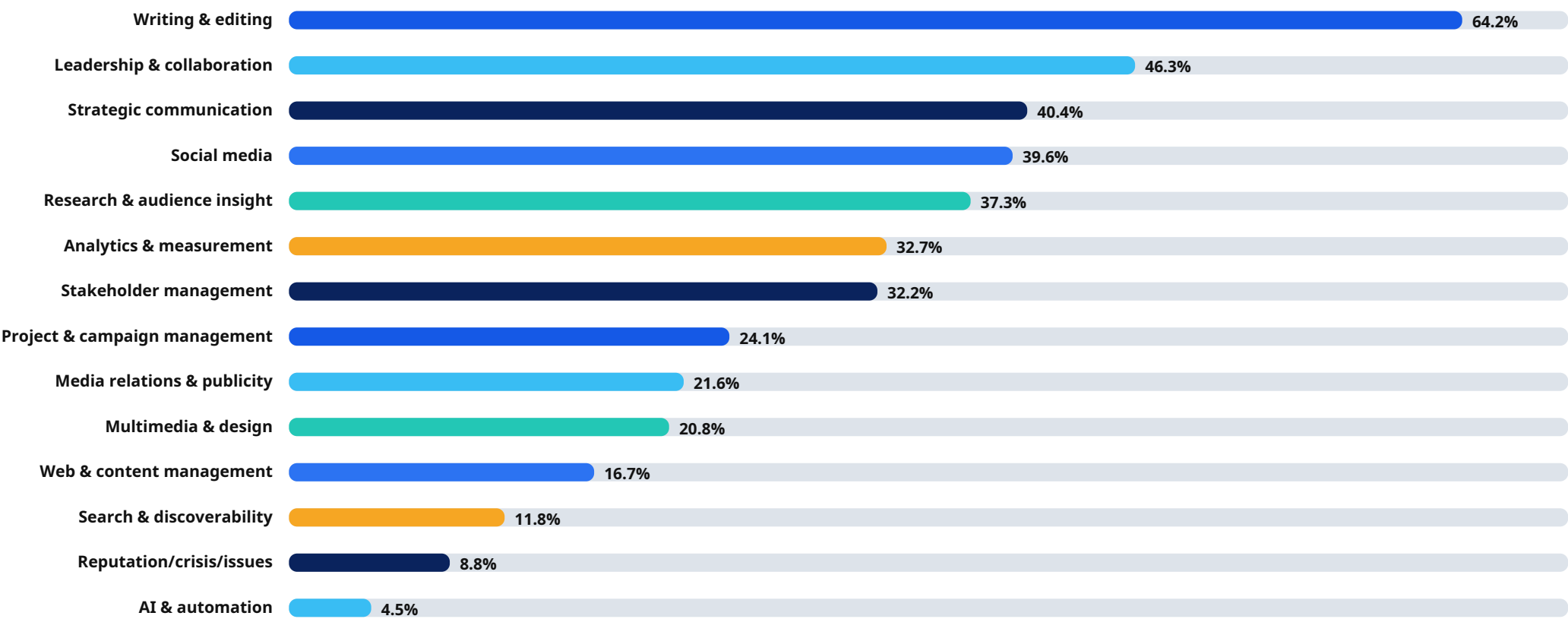
04

How can established and emerging capabilities inform a digital-authority framework?



Writing remains the strongest skill signal

Across 14 competency domains, writing and editing appeared in nearly two thirds of the final analytical sample.



64.2%

Writing and editing remained the dominant competency domain.

607

of 946 advertisements

Why this matters

The strongest signal in an AI-era dataset was still a human communication capability. Writing remains the expressive foundation on which strategy, research, stakeholder engagement and digital distribution depend.

95% confidence interval

61.1-67.2%

The interval describes uncertainty around the observed proportion in this analytical sample; it does not make the dataset nationally or globally representative.



The human core extends beyond writing

Leadership, strategy, research and stakeholder management all appeared in roughly one third or more of advertisements.

46.3%

Leadership & collaboration

40.4%

Strategic communication

37.3%

Research & audience insight

32.2%

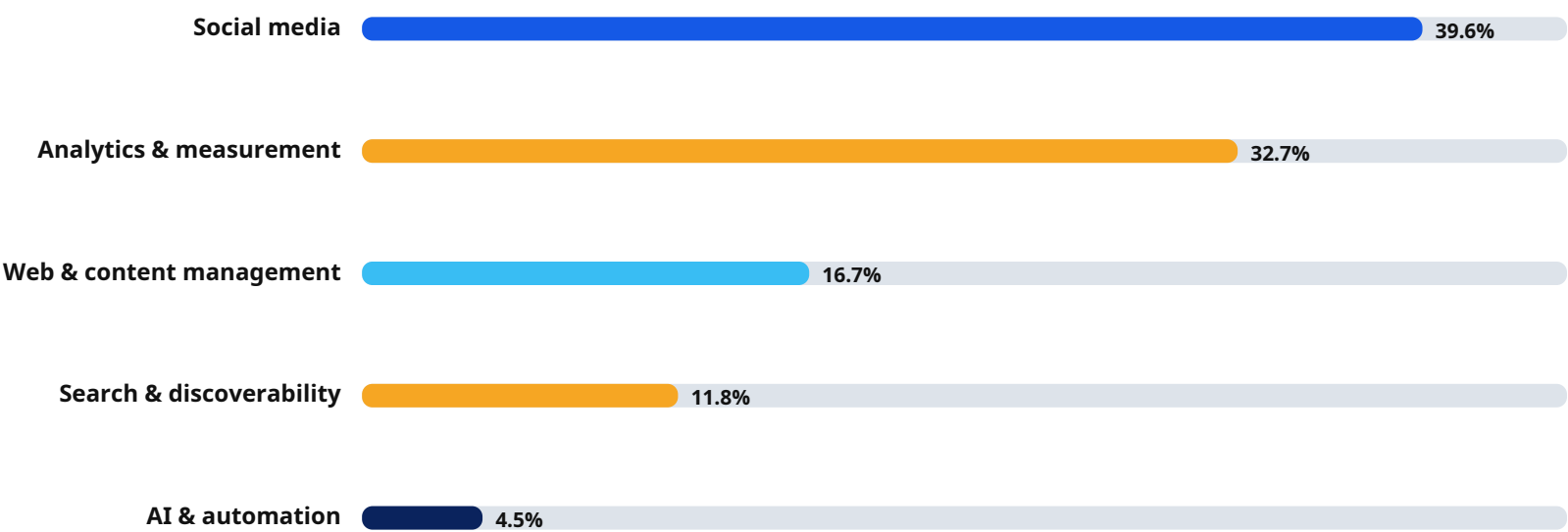
Stakeholder management

The emerging skillset is layered: technical capabilities are being added around a core of communication judgement, rather than replacing it.



A digital layer is already visible

Social media and analytics were common; web, search and AI were less prevalent but strategically distinctive.



11.8%

Search & discoverability

4.5%

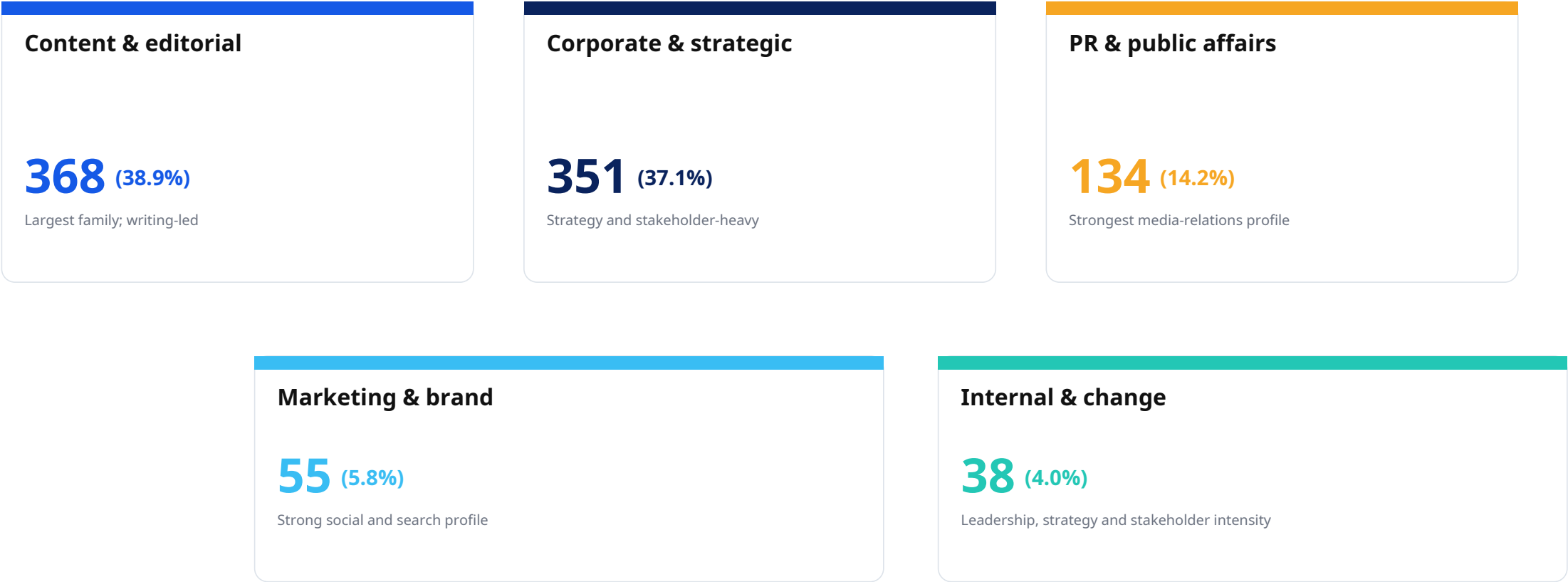
AI & automation

These were emerging rather than dominant employer requirements in early 2024.



Communication jobs were not one uniform market

The five role families shared a common foundation but differed sharply in emphasis.



The skill profile changes with the job label

Selected skill-domain prevalence by role family (%).

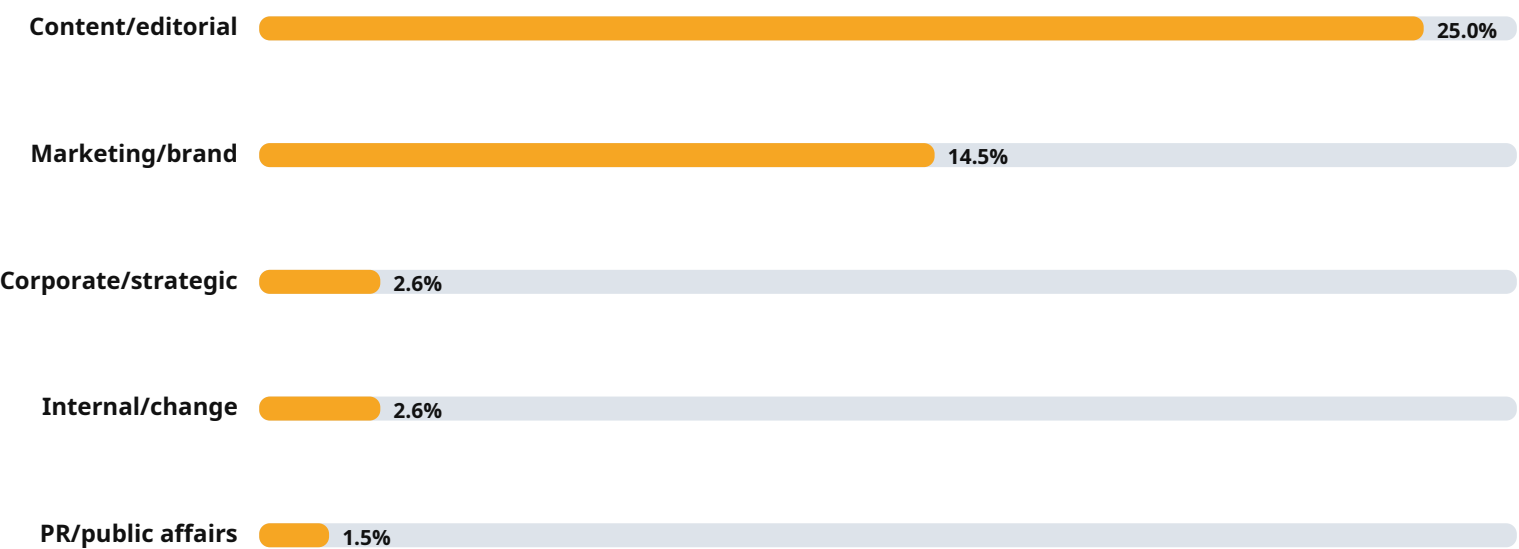
	Writing	Strategy	Social	Analytics	Search	AI	Stakeholder	Media
Content/editorial	88.0	20.9	30.7	34.2	25.0	5.4	23.9	7.1
Corporate/strategic	52.1	58.4	46.4	30.5	2.6	3.7	42.2	27.6
Internal/change	57.9	68.4	18.4	44.7	2.6	2.6	65.8	5.3
Marketing/brand	38.2	56.4	69.1	38.2	14.5	10.9	40.0	27.3
PR/public affairs	42.5	32.1	40.3	28.4	1.5	2.2	16.4	47.8

Read across each row: content/editorial is writing-heavy; internal/change is strategy and stakeholder-heavy; marketing/brand leads social media; PR/public affairs leads media relations.



Search is not evenly distributed

Discoverability appeared in 11.8% overall, but employer demand clustered in particular occupational labels.



Key result

23.5 pp

difference between
content/editorial and
PR/public affairs.

The result describes how employers
allocated search responsibility; it does
not define where search should sit
professionally.



Search was 16.7x more visible in content/editorial than in PR/public affairs

This is an occupational allocation signal, not a claim that content sits outside PR.

25.0%

Content & editorial

1.5%

PR & public affairs

Interpretation

Search was much more explicit in jobs carrying content and editorial titles than in roles explicitly labelled public relations and public affairs.

For a profession concerned with visibility and public understanding, that boundary is strategically important to watch.

AI appeared in only 4.5% of advertisements

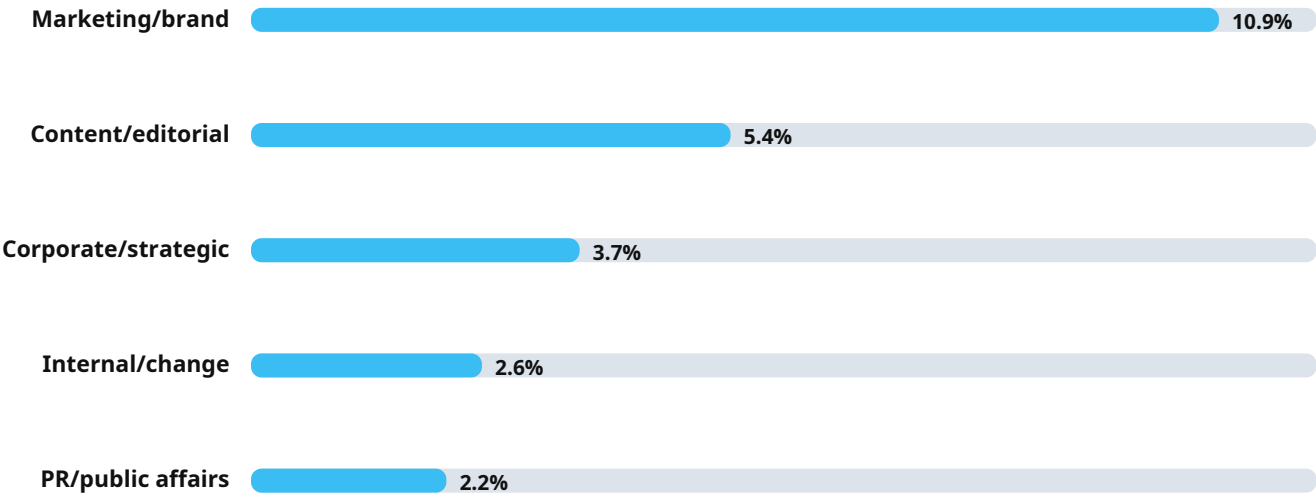
The low frequency is useful because the dataset captures a transition point, not because AI was irrelevant.

4.5%

43 of 946 advertisements

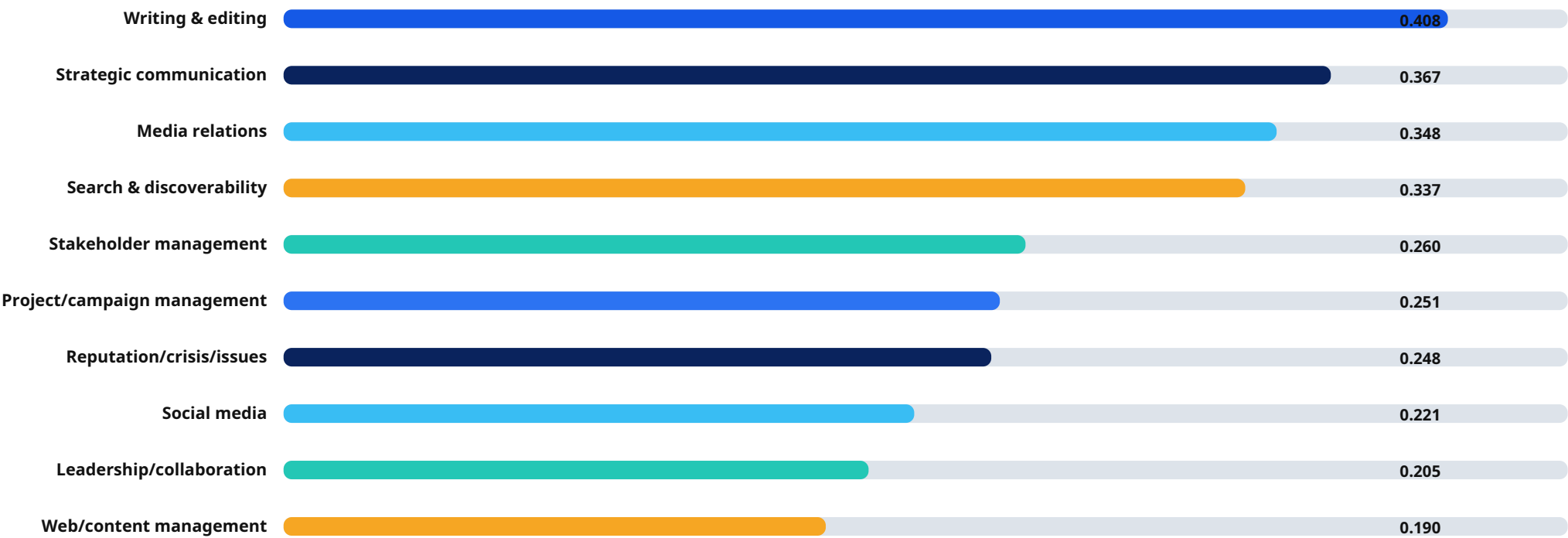
Early-2024 baseline

A later replication can test how quickly AI moved from experimentation into formal job requirements.



The strongest occupational differences were not about AI

Writing, strategy, media relations and search varied most strongly by role family.



Cramer's V effect size; chi-square tests for the ten reported domains had $p < .001$. With 14 domain tests, a Bonferroni threshold would be .0036, so these reported associations remain below that conservative threshold.



CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTION

The Digital Authority Skills Framework

A provisional synthesis of the observed skill architecture - designed for future testing, not presented as a validated latent structure.



Four layers. One organisational information environment.

The framework connects traditional communication judgement with how information travels, is measured and is increasingly supported by automation.

01 UNDERSTAND

Communication Craft

Makes organisational knowledge clear and usable.

02 TRUST

Relational Authority

Builds credibility through relationships, reputation and judgement.

03 DISCOVER

Digital Distribution

Helps information travel and become findable.

04 LEARN + SUPPORT

Intelligence & Automation

Uses measurement and AI to improve decisions responsibly.

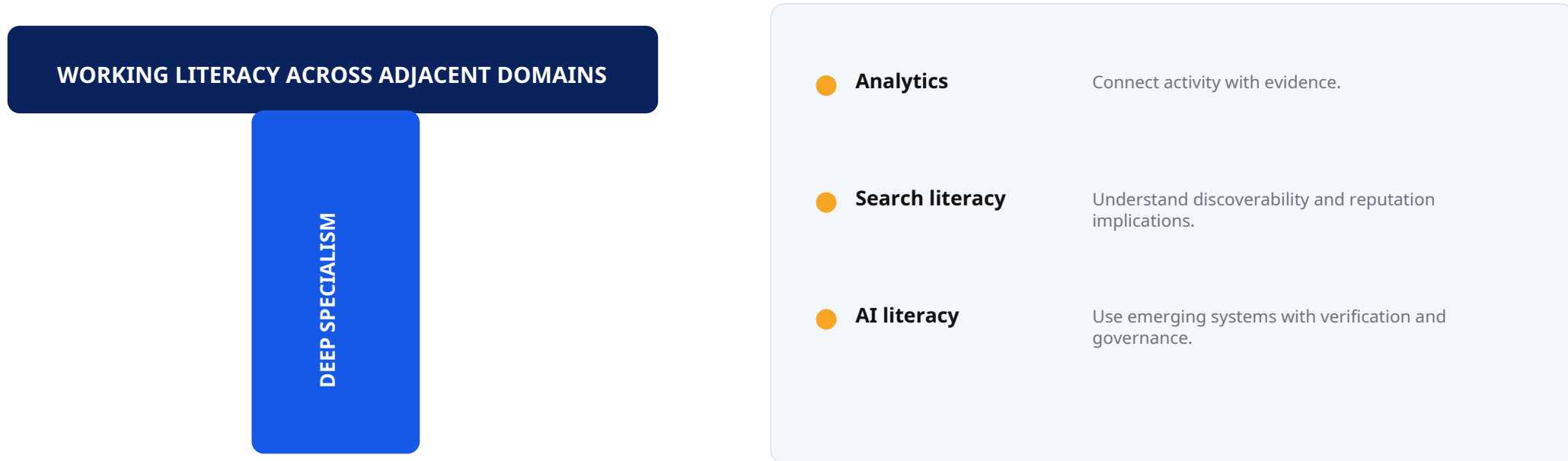
The framework is not a claim that every communicator needs equal mastery of every domain.

It is a way to study how communication craft, relationships, distribution, measurement and automation may combine around organisational authority.



For practitioners: depth first, then adjacent literacy

The findings support a T-shaped professional profile rather than a requirement to become a technical specialist in every domain.



For universities: add capability around the core

Curriculum renewal should preserve writing, research, ethics and strategic judgement while making digital practice visible and applied.

PRESERVE THE CORE

Writing	64.2%
Strategy	40.4%
Research	37.3%
Stakeholders	32.2%

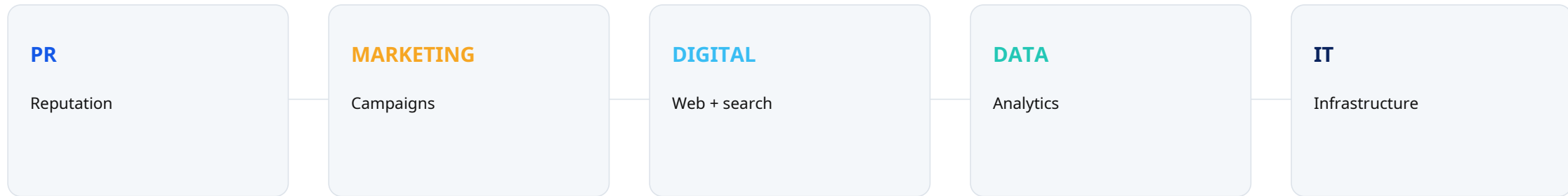
ADD PRACTICAL DIGITAL EXPOSURE

Social publishing	39.6%
Analytics	32.7%
Web/content	16.7%
Search	11.8%
Responsible AI	4.5% baseline



For employers: fragmented ownership can weaken authority

Stakeholders experience one organisation even when reputation, content, search, social, analytics and technology sit in different teams.



Job design should separate specialist technical expertise from strategic literacy. Communication leaders do not need to control every system; they need enough visibility to understand how those systems shape what stakeholders find, see and believe.



The dataset cannot tell us what African employers want.

That is a limitation - and a research opportunity.

AFRICA



What a regional replication could test

- Which communication skills employers explicitly demand across African markets.
- How quickly search and AI are entering formal job descriptions.
- Whether university curricula align with observed labour-market signals.
- How skill profiles vary by country and role family over time.



What this study can - and cannot - claim

The strength of the report depends on keeping the empirical findings separate from interpretation and future research.

SUPPORTED

- Writing was the most prevalent coded competency domain.
- Skill profiles differed across the five role families.
- Search was concentrated in content/editorial and marketing/brand roles.
- AI/automation was uncommon in this early-2024 sample.
- The sample provides a baseline for later replication.

NOT SUPPORTED

- A global estimate of communication labour-market demand.
- A direct measure of what professionals actually do at work.
- Proof that AI or search skills have increased over time.
- A validated four-factor Digital Authority competency structure.
- Conclusions about African employer demand.



Three boundaries matter most

The results are useful when read as a transparent snapshot rather than a universal labour-market estimate.

01

TIME + GEOGRAPHY

24 March-19 April 2024; one platform; heavily weighted towards the United States.

02

RULE-BASED CODING

Title rules and dictionaries can miss unconventional language or over-identify terms in context.

03

ARCHIVAL GAPS

Original title-matching code and a manually coded validation subset were not preserved.



Research integrity includes reporting the awkward number.

The archived narrative described 948 candidates. The classified role-family counts and published percentages reconcile to 946.



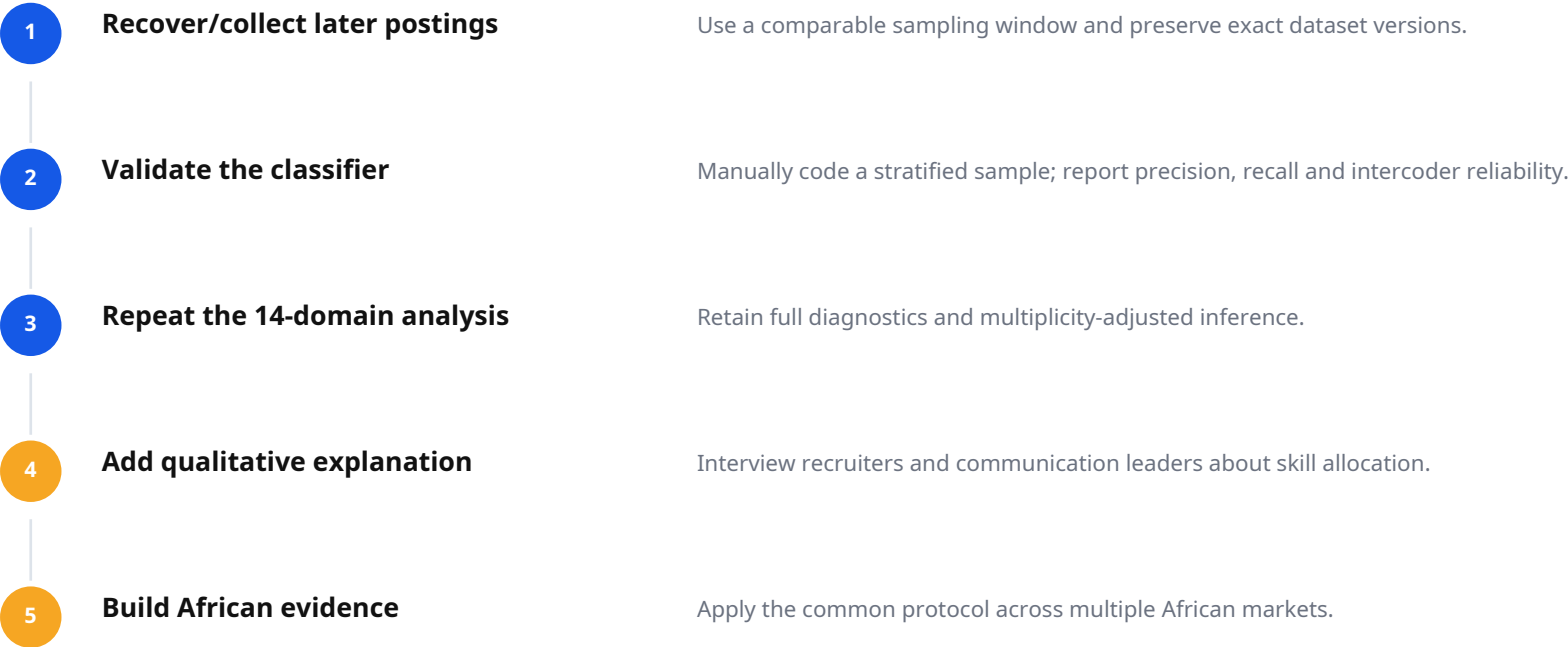
Why 946 is used

The five role-family counts total 946, and prevalence calculations such as 607 writing records = 64.2% also reconcile to 946. The disposition of the remaining two records is not documented.



The next study should be a validated replication

A 2026 or later sample can test whether the early-2024 baseline has shifted.



CONCLUSION

The profession is not losing its communication core.

It is gaining a wider responsibility for how organisational information is written, trusted, found, measured and responsibly supported by AI.



Methodological note

What is recoverable from the archive - and what is not.

Dataset identity	Kaggle: LinkedIn Job Postings (2023-2024).	Verified
Analysed snapshot	123,849 postings; 31 variables; 24 Mar-19 Apr 2024.	Recoverable
Candidate / final sample	948 initial candidates; 946 classified analytical records.	Reconciled
Role-family rules	Five role families documented; original matching code not retained.	Partial
Skill dictionary	Fourteen domains and illustrative terms retained.	Available
Validation sample	No manually coded validation subset retained.	Unavailable
Inferential output	Ten strongest associations retained with chi-square, $p<.001$ and Cramer's V.	Partial



Selected references

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