

CERTIFICATIONS GIVE
**DIGITAL MEDIA
ENTHUSIASTS AN EDGE**

Adobe Certified Associates Survey



Methodology

Why?

Quantify essential elements for launching a successful digital media career and the importance of certifications, such as the Adobe Certified Associate (ACA).

Who?

A mixture of current and aspiring digital media employees, ages 18-29, with and without ACA certification.

Margin of Error

Total sample margin of error – ±3%

US – ±3.5%, South Korea – 9.8%, Mexico – ±7.6%

Current Digital Media Employees – ±4.7%, Aspiring – ±3.9%

ACA holders – ±4.4%, Non-ACA holders – ±4.1%

How many?

1,066 total

Countries: US – 800, South Korea – 100, Mexico – 166

Professional status: Current Digital Media Employees – 431, Aspiring – 635

ACA status: ACA holders – 504, Non-ACA holders – 562




How?

15-minute online survey

When?

Research was conducted in September/October 2016

Our sample of digital media enthusiasts includes:

		Men	Women	Current Digital Media Professionals	Aspiring Digital Media Professionals	ACA Holders	Non-ACA Holders
 US	75%	44%	56%	50%	50%	52%	48%
 Mexico	16%	66%	34%	10%	90%	42%	58%
 South Korea	9%	22%	78%	17%	83%	19%	81%
	COUNTRY	GENDER		PROFESSIONAL STATUS		ACA STATUS	

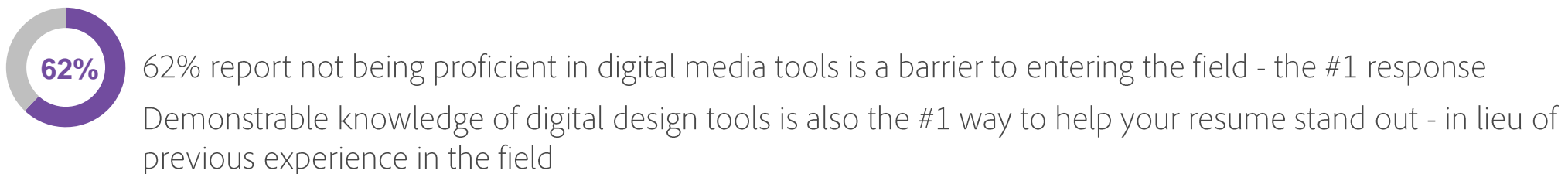
Digital media is an exciting, growing sector



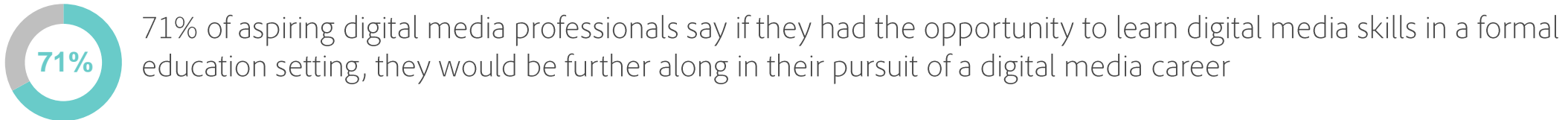
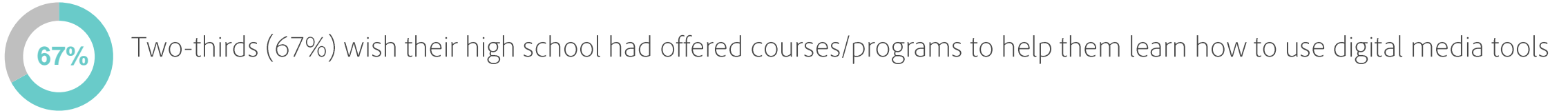
However, with growth comes more competition



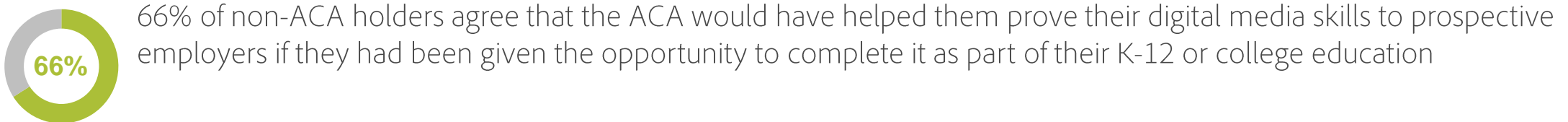
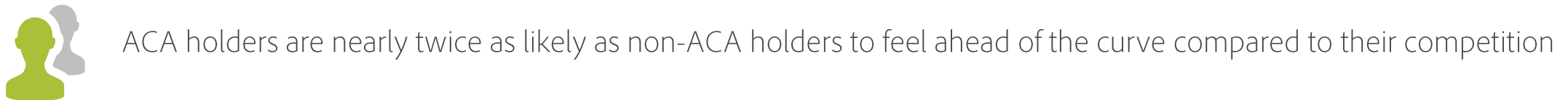
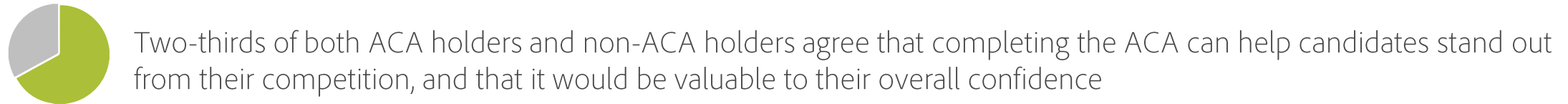
Demonstrating proficiency in digital media tools is critical to being able to secure a job in digital media



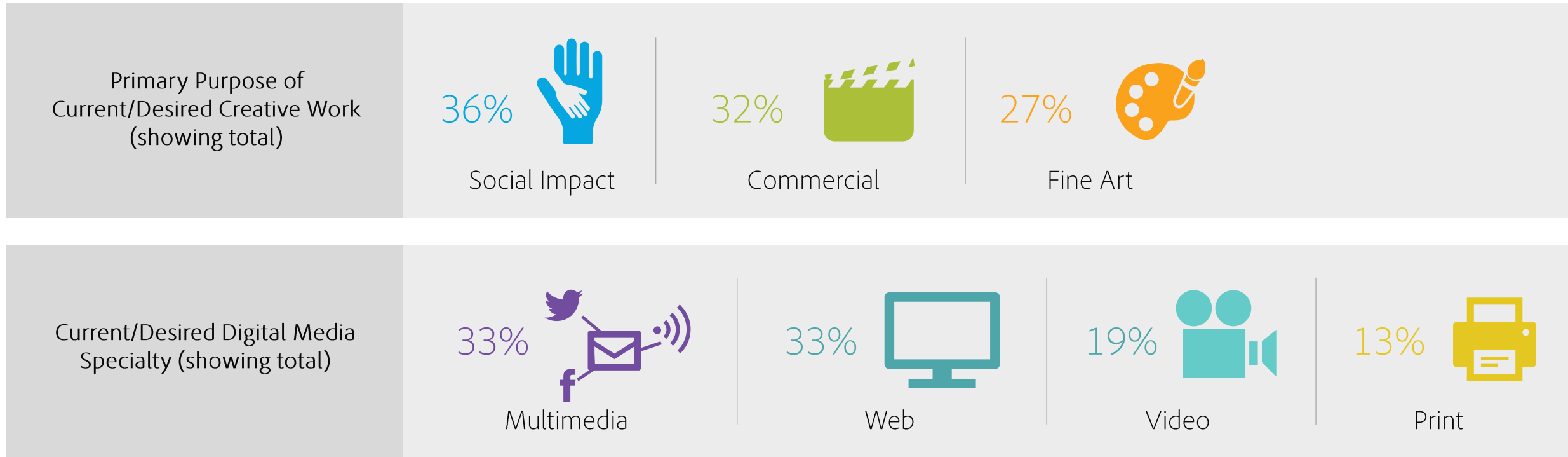
Because of this, early training for digital media tools is high on wish lists



The ACA addresses the key barriers to entering the digital media field: It is seen as a way to help candidates stand out, be competitive, develop confidence, and demonstrate their proficiency in digital media tools

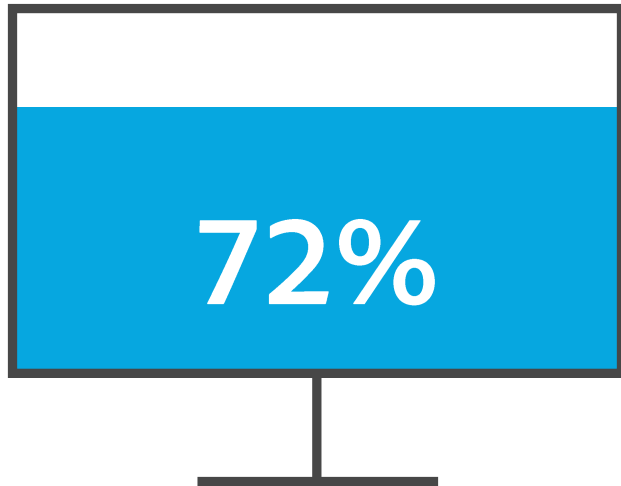


Digital media enthusiasts pursue a variety of creative purposes, but primarily specialize in web and multimedia



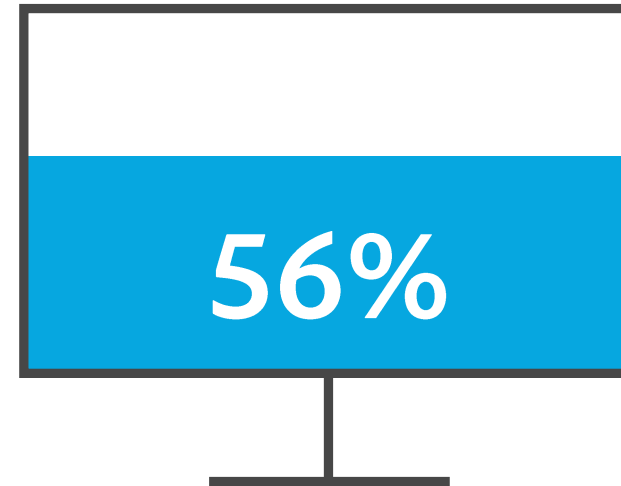
Q1. What is the primary purpose of your creative work? If you don't currently produce creative work, please select the type of work you wish to make.
Q2. What type of digital media do you specialize in? If you don't currently work in the digital media field, please select the type of work you wish to specialize in.
N = 1,066

There is excitement about future opportunities



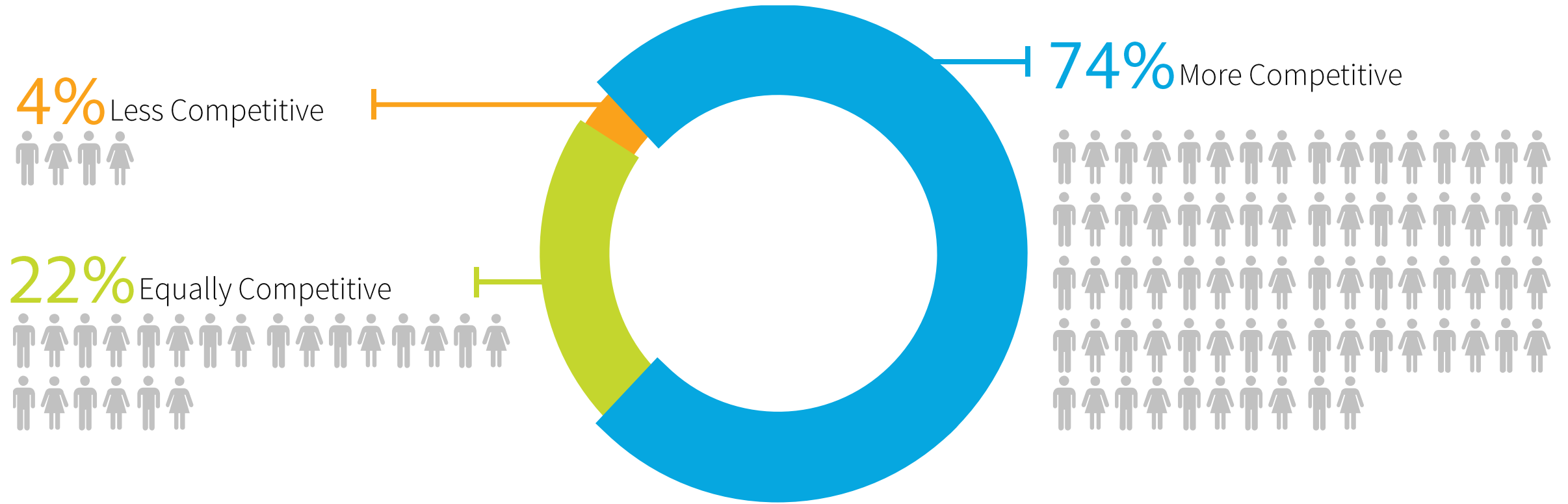
of digital media enthusiasts
are excited about their
future opportunities within
digital media

&



of current digital media
professionals plan to stay
within the industry for their
entire career

3 in 4 view the digital media field as increasingly competitive



Reasons for heightened competitiveness include increased interest and access to education

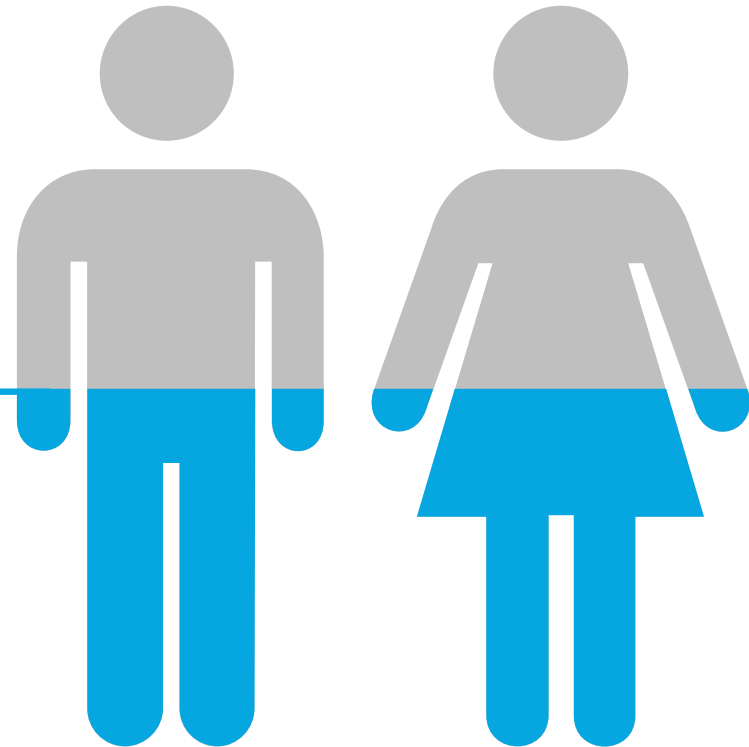
Only 39 respondents felt digital media was less competitive

Top Reasons the Digital Media Field Has Become More Competitive
Among those who believe digital media has become more competitive

- #1 | More people are now interested in this field (55%)
- #2 | Increased accessibility of tutorials & online materials allow people to teach themselves required skills (52%)
- #3 | More people are using online networking resources to stand out (44%)
- #4 | Employers are looking for a wider variety of skills (43%)
- #5 | Increase in visual and digital communication (43%)

More competition also causes significant concern about differentiation

56% are concerned about their ability to stand out from the competition.



Keeping up with tools is imperative - lack of proficiency in digital media tools is the No. 1 perceived barrier to entering the digital media field

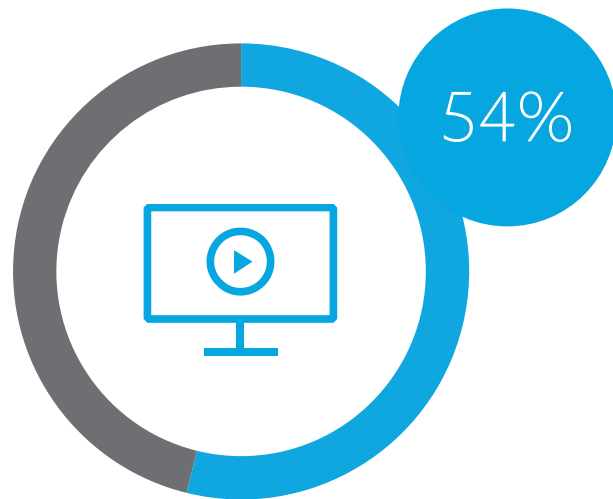
62%

say not being proficient in digital media tools is a barrier to entering the field

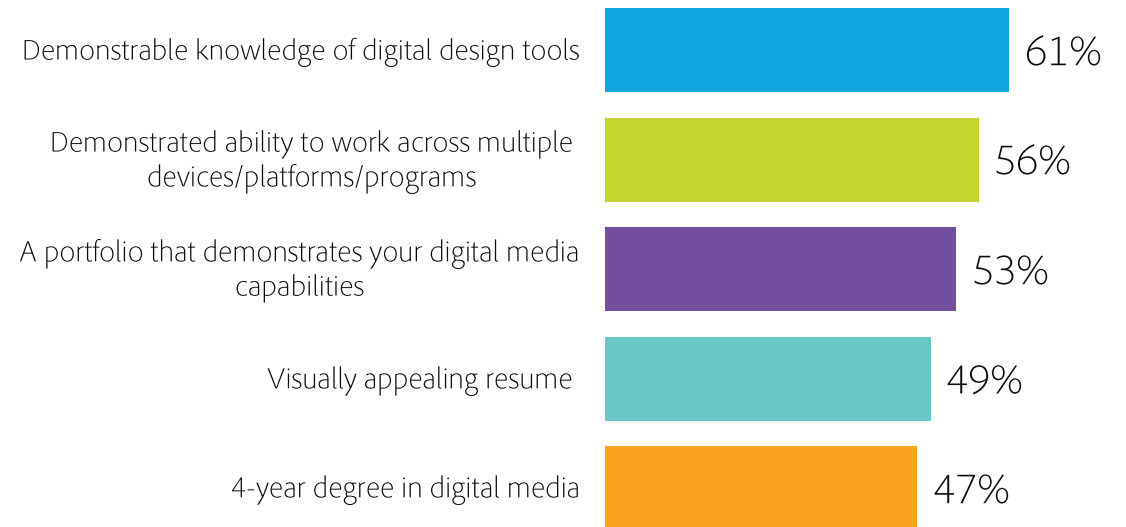


Demonstrable knowledge of tools and cross-platform expertise are also key to overcoming lack of industry experience

"Lack of previous digital media experience is a barrier to entering the digital media field"
Showing total



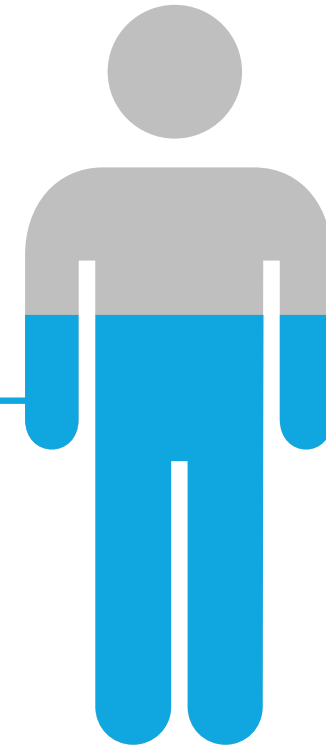
Top Things that Help a Resume Stand Out in Lieu of Digital Media Experience
Showing total



Early training on digital media tools is high on wish lists

67%

wish their high school had offered courses or programs by reputable organizations to help them learn how to use digital media tools



Digital media enthusiasts are hands-on and value learning and education



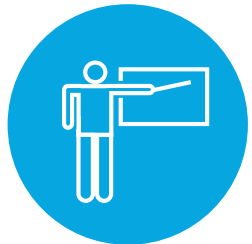
73%

I prefer to learn hands-on or "by doing"
vs through direct instruction



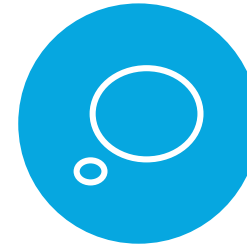
62%

What you know is more important than
who you know
vs "Who you know is more important than what you know"



67%

Teaching others helps me to better understand &
refine what I myself have learned
vs do not feel confident enough in my digital media skills to teach others



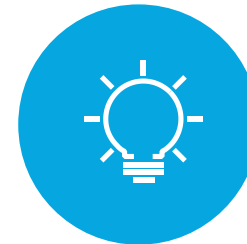
56%

I like to learn for the sake of learning
vs learn for the sake of furthering my career



67%

Taking courses, getting degrees, & earning certifications
outside of work shows passion & dedication
*vs "Employers are not as concerned about courses, degrees, or
certifications as they are professional experience"*



59%

I prefer to learn by being taught by an expert
vs prefer to learn on my own

Those who aspire to enter the industry believe if they had had access to digital media training, they would now be further along professionally



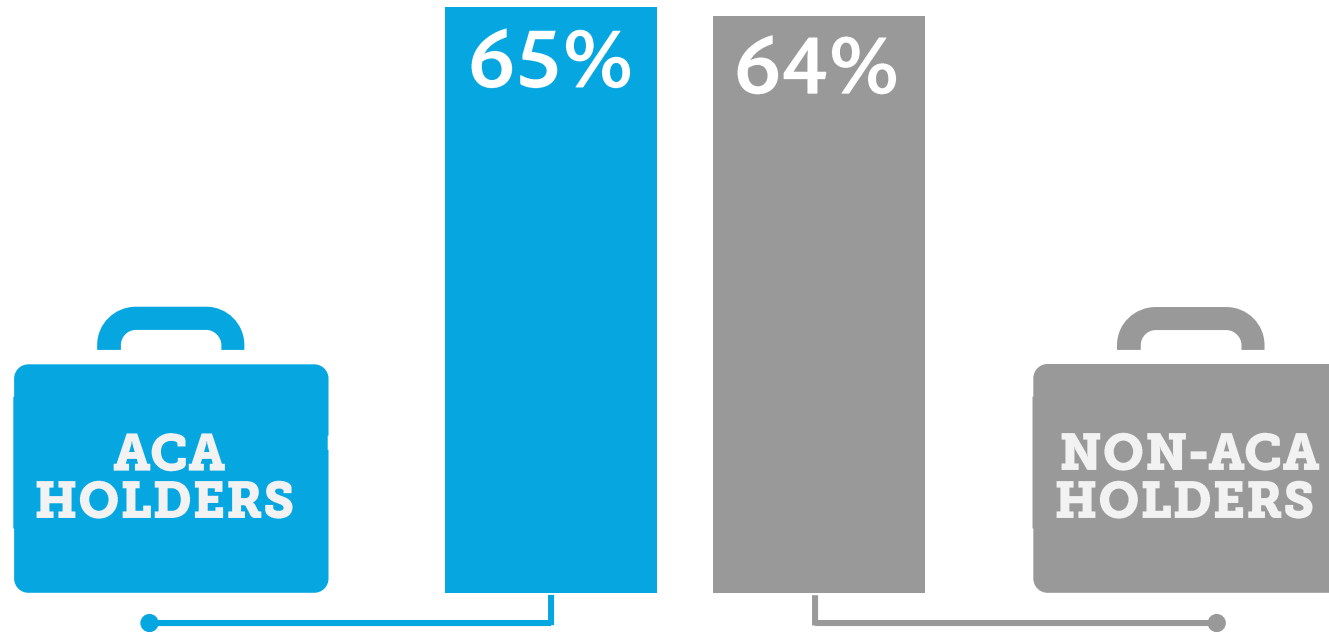
71% (66% US, 75% South Korea, 82% Mexico)

of aspiring digital media professionals say if they had had the opportunity to learn digital media skills in a formal educational setting, they would be further along in their pursuit of a digital media career

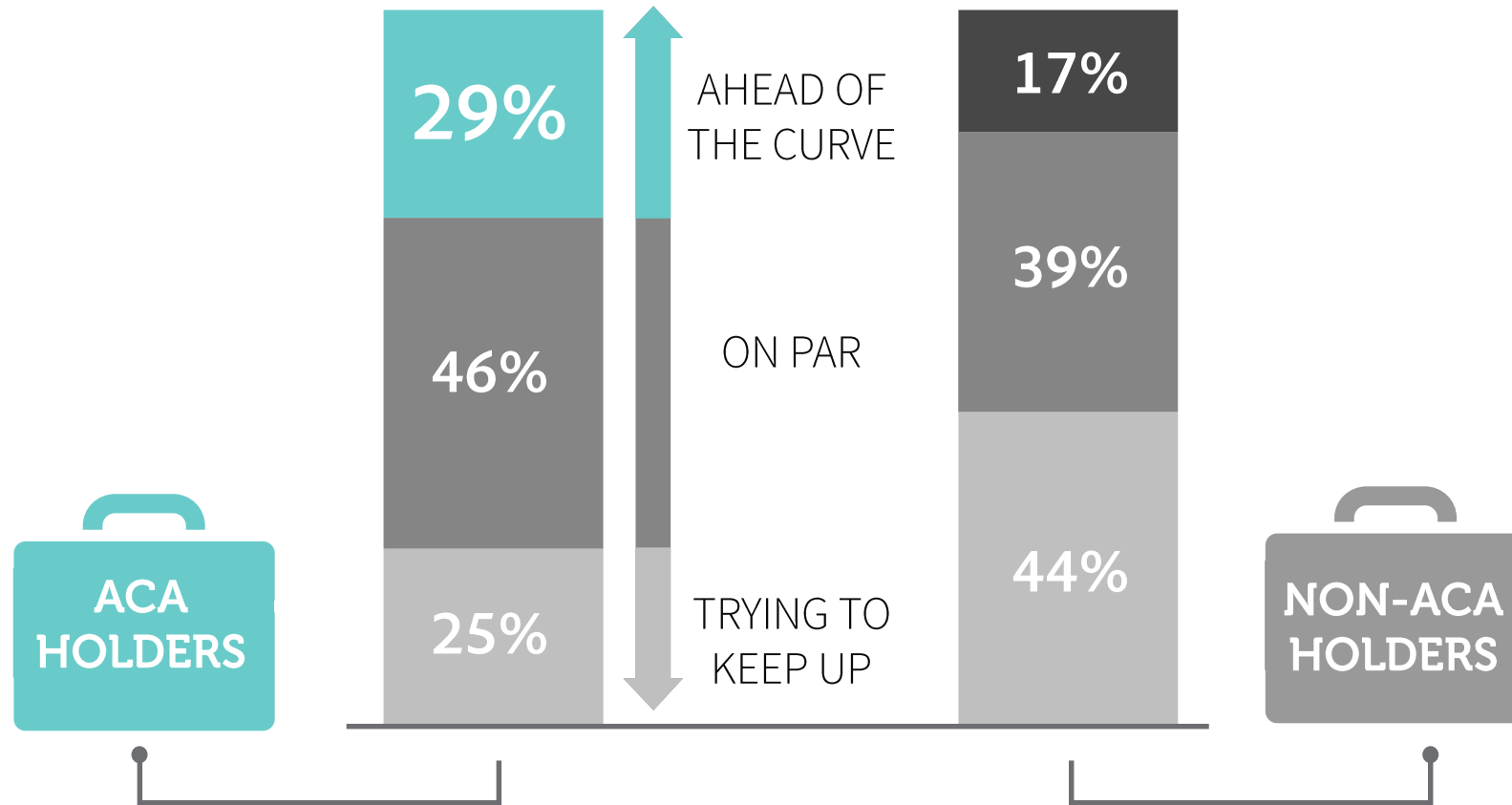
vs "In the end, it would not have made a difference to my career if I had learned digital media skills in a formal educational setting"

ACA holders and non-ACA holders agree that the ACA provides a way for candidates to stand out

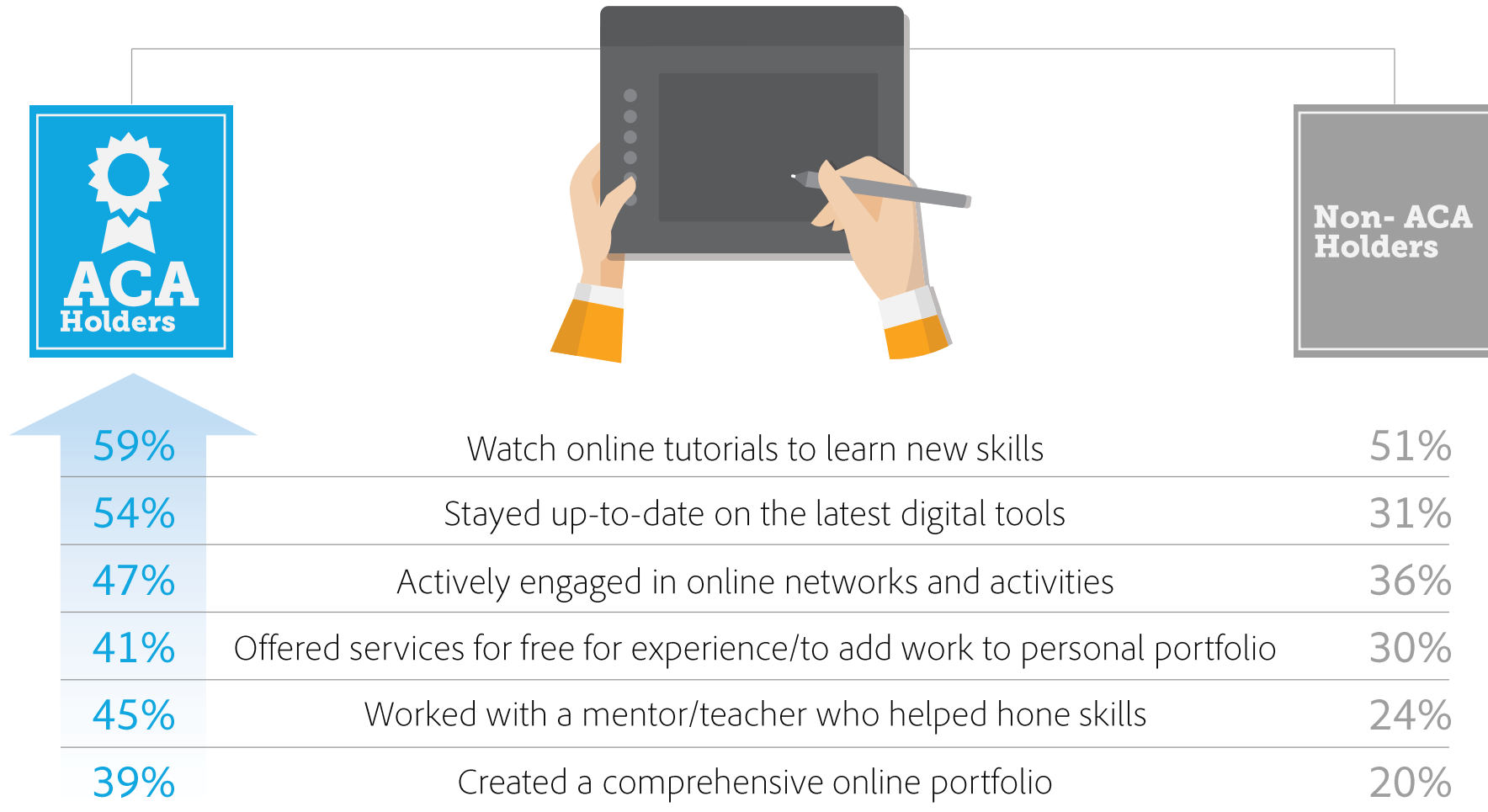
“Completing the ACA can help candidates stand out from the competition”



ACA holders are nearly twice as likely as non-ACA holders to feel ahead of the curve compared to their competition in the digital media industry



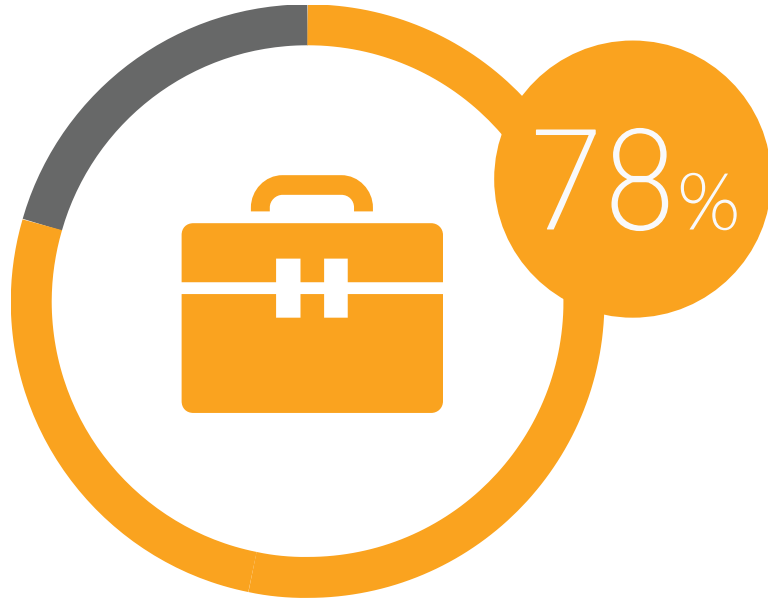
ACA holders are also more likely to have taken proactive actions to set themselves apart, especially keeping up to date with digital tools



Note: Aspiring digital media employees are also less likely to have taken these actions

Q14. Which of the following have you done to differentiate yourself from your competition?
 N = 1,066 total, 504 ACA holders, 562 non-ACA holders

Just behind creative talent at 80%, confidence is seen as the most important quality to getting first job in digital media industry



"Confidence is important to getting your first job in the digital media industry"



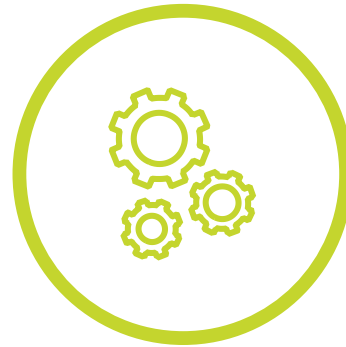
One of the most valuable aspects of the ACA is its impact on confidence, along with learning and proof of new skills and career trajectory

Value of ACA as Part of K-12 or College



CONFIDENCE

- To my confidence in my digital media skills (71% non-ACA holder, 73% ACA holder)
- To my overall confidence (62% non-ACA, 69% ACA)
- To my ambition/motivation to succeed (63% non-ACA, 71% ACA)



SKILLS

- To learning new digital media skills (73% non-ACA, 76% ACA)
- To proving my digital media skills to prospective employers (66% non-ACA, 69% ACA)



CAREER

- To deciding to pursue a career in digital media (67% non-ACA, 68% ACA)
- To launching my digital media career* (66% non-ACA, 71% ACA)
- To making new connections in the digital media field (49% non-ACA, 59% ACA)

Q28. How valuable would the ACA program have been to each of the following if you had taken it as part of your K-12 or college education? Top 2 box, N = 562 (non-ACA holders)

Q31. How valuable did you find the ACA program to the following? Top 2 box, N = 504 (ACA holders)

*Asked of Current Digital Media Employees only, N = 183 non-ACA holders, 248 ACA holders



Mexico & South Korea



Those in Mexico feel more overwhelmed about the state of the digital media industry

- They are most likely to think the digital media industry is more competitive compared to five years ago (84% vs. 74% globally)
- They are more likely to think they're behind their competition (45% vs. 35% globally)
- They are more concerned about their ability to stand out compared to their competition (67% vs. 56% globally)



To help combat this, Mexican respondents place more importance on education and proof of skills...

- To differentiate themselves from their competition, those in Mexico are more likely to keep up with most up to date digital media tools (49% vs. 42% globally) and taking relevant academic courses outside of a degree (37% vs. 29% globally)
- They are also more likely to think demonstrable knowledge of digital media tools and digital media certifications will help a resume stand out in lieu of professional experience (72% vs. 61% globally // 52% vs. 44% globally, respectively)



...and are more interested in getting a head start on learning digital media tools

- Those in Mexico are more likely to wish their high school had offered programs to teach digital media skills (83% vs. 67% globally)
- They are also more likely feel they'd be further along in their career if they had the opportunity to learn digital media skills in a formal education setting (82% vs. 71% globally)



Those in South Korea are less concerned about proving proficiency in tools

- They are less likely to see a lack of proficiency in digital media tools as a barrier to entering the industry (47% vs. 62% globally)
- They also think demonstrable knowledge of tools is less important to getting a first job (49% vs. 74% globally)



Instead, they place more importance on soft skills, such as confidence and creative talent

- South Koreans are most likely to say that soft skills are more important than hard skills (66% vs. 56% globally)
- They see the two most important things to landing your first job in digital media as confidence (76% vs. 78% globally) and creative talent (72% vs. 80% globally)



However, confidence is also where South Koreans struggle

- South Koreans are most likely to feel behind their competition (53% vs. 35% globally)
- They also express less confidence in their ability to teach others (51% vs. 33% globally)
- South Koreans are concerned about their ability to stand out (63% vs. 56% globally), which may be due to the fact that are least likely to have taken actions to set themselves apart from their competition (16% have done nothing to set themselves apart vs. 7% globally)
- Relatedly, they express the least interest in completing the ACA (40% vs. 63% globally)

Current vs Aspiring Digital Media Employees



Aspiring professionals less likely to feel ahead of the curve, less likely to take actions to solve this

- Current digital media employees are nearly twice as likely as aspiring professionals to feel ahead of the curve compared to competition (30% vs. 17%)
- Perhaps because they are twice as likely to have an online portfolio (67% vs. 34%); in general, aspiring digital media professionals are less likely to have taken actions to differentiate themselves from their competition
- Current digital media employees see connections and previous experience as more important to getting one's first job in digital media than aspiring professionals
- Relatedly, current digital media employees are more likely to value hard skills over soft skills (48% vs. 41%)



Current professionals more influenced by educational experience, more interested in ACA

- Current digital media employees are more likely to say their teachers influenced their decision to pursue digital media (41% vs. 33%) and that teachers have played a significant role in the development of their skills and career (59% vs. 50%)
- Among those who did not complete the ACA, current digital media employees are three times as likely to be familiar with it as aspiring professionals (39% vs. 13%) and are more likely to express interest in completing it in K-12/college if given the opportunity (69% vs. 60%)

THANK YOU
