

Wealth Flash

The Knowledge Share

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China Sets Strategic Sights on Skills

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China is well known for its long-term strategic vision and highly effective execution. As a country, it sets strategic goals decades ahead and mobilizes the entire nation's resources behind them. When it succeeds, the results can take China's competitiveness to a new level, while sending shockwaves around the world. Read on to find out what China is up to next.

CIO Summary

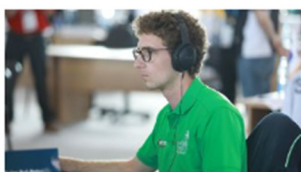
- ❖ **China winning the global skills race.** China dominated the 2026 WorldSkills Competition, reflecting years of concerted investment in vocational education and technical skill development.
- ❖ **Vocational skills becoming a strategic priority.** Beijing's success underscores its ability to mobilize nationwide resources behind long-term priorities – a proven model that has supported progress in other areas such as energy security, advanced manufacturing, export upgrading and the green transition.
- ❖ **Major implications extending beyond vocational education.** A strong and broad base of skilled workers could support China's ambitions for technology self-reliance and AI innovation, while also helping the country adapt to AI-driven workforce disruptions and labor market shifts.

A partial list of skills in the WorldSkills Competition (see Appendix for the full list)



Chemical Laboratory Technology

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Cloud Computing

Information and Communication Technology



CNC Milling

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



CNC Turning

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Concrete Construction Work

Construction and Building Technology



Cooking

Social and Personal Services



Cyber Security

Information and Communication Technology



Dental Prosthetics

Social and Personal Services

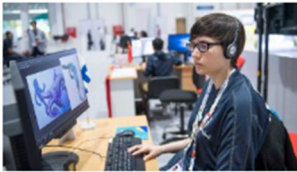
The Economist recently featured an article titled [“China lavishes attention on a little-known competition”](#), likening the phenomenon to a “Skill Olympics”. We’d like to share a few key takeaways from the piece. Hope you find them useful.

- **China is winning the skills race. Big time.** China won a record 41 gold medals at the [WorldSkills Competition](#) in 2026, ten times more than second-place South Korea. The competition covers a wide range of technical disciplines, from electrical installations and automobile technology to cyber security and robotics (see Appendix).
- **Skills becoming a national strategic priority.** China's dominance at the “Skills Olympics” is no accident. Beijing has built an effective talent management system to identify, train and develop highly skilled workers. Contestants are selected through local, provincial and national competitions before receiving specialized training at dedicated vocational institutions and companies.
- **A worthy effort to close the skilled-labor gap.** China faces a significant shortage of skilled workers and continues to struggle with the social stigma attached to vocational education and blue-collar jobs. To address these issues, the government is leveraging events such as WorldSkills to raise the status of skilled trades and encourage more young people to pursue vocational careers.

Our Take

- **When China mobilizes the full weight of the nation...** The WorldSkills Competition result reflects not only individual excellence, but also China’s ability to achieve strategic goals once they become national priorities and mobilize the whole nation’s resources behind it. Past successes also include [energy security](#), [advanced manufacturing](#), [export upgrading](#) and [the green transition](#) – themes that we’ve covered in our Wealth Flash reports.
- **Watch out for technology self-reliance, AI and innovation.** In addition to the vocational development above, China also has a technology-focused national priority, with AI at the center of US-China strategic competition. Beijing’s track record in other strategic areas suggests a credible chance of catching up in the US-China AI race.
- **The human capital behind AI: Not just PhDs.** AI requires not only researchers and engineers, but also a large pool of electricians, advanced manufacturing workers, automation specialists, robotics operators and other skilled workers. Many such capabilities are covered by the WorldSkills Competition, featuring disciplines such as cloud computing, digital construction, electronics and robotics (see Appendix). China's strong commitment to vocational education therefore provides an important foundation for its AI and high-tech ambitions.
- **Preparing for AI-driven workforce disruptions.** In July 2025, we wrote that AI could grow into a multi-trillion-dollar industry by displacing a significant amount of “human labor”, particularly white-collar office jobs. China's emphasis on vocational education and skills development help strengthen its workforce’s practical and technical capabilities. This could leave China better positioned to adapt to the structural changes and employment disruptions brought about by AI.

Appendix: What kind of skills are included in the WorldSkills Competition?



3D Digital Game Art

Creative Arts and Fashion



Additive Manufacturing

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Aircraft Maintenance

Transportation and Logistics



Autobody Repair

Transportation and Logistics



Automobile Technology

Transportation and Logistics



Autonomous Mobile Robotics

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Bakery

Social and Personal Services



Beauty Therapy

Social and Personal Services



Bricklaying

Construction and Building Technology



Cabinetmaking

Construction and Building Technology



Car Painting

Transportation and Logistics



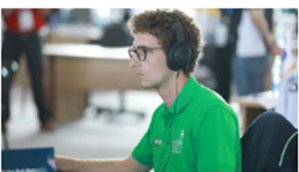
Carpentry

Construction and Building Technology



Chemical Laboratory Technology

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Cloud Computing

Information and Communication Technology



CNC Milling

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



CNC Turning

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



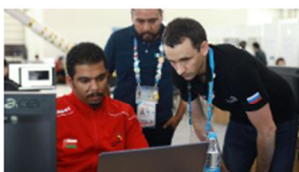
Concrete Construction Work

Construction and Building Technology



Cooking

Social and Personal Services



Cyber Security

Information and Communication Technology



Dental Prosthetics

Social and Personal Services



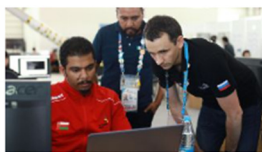
Concrete Construction Work

Construction and Building Technology



Cooking

Social and Personal Services



Cyber Security

Information and Communication Technology



Dental Prosthetics

Social and Personal Services



Digital Construction

Construction and Building Technology



Digital Interactive Media Design

Creative Arts and Fashion



Electrical Installations

Construction and Building Technology



Electronics

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



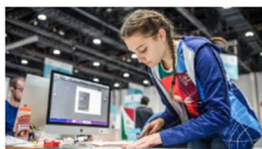
Fashion Technology

Creative Arts and Fashion



Floristry

Creative Arts and Fashion



Graphic Design Technology

Creative Arts and Fashion



Hairdressing

Social and Personal Services



Health and Social Care

Social and Personal Services



Heavy Vehicle Technology

Transportation and Logistics



Hotel Reception

Social and Personal Services



ICT Network Infrastructure

Information and Communication Technology



Industrial Control

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Industrial Design Technology

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Industrial Mechanics

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Industry 4.0

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Intelligent Security Technology

Construction and Building Technology



IT Network Systems Administration

Information and Communication Technology



Jewellery

Creative Arts and Fashion



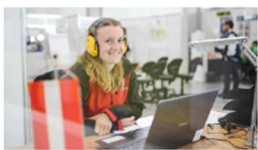
Joinery

Construction and Building Technology



Landscape Gardening

Construction and Building Technology



Logistics and Freight Forwarding

Transportation and Logistics



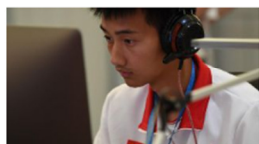
Mechanical Engineering CAD

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



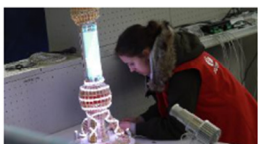
Mechatronics

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Mobile Applications Development

Information and Communication Technology



Optoelectronic Technology

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Painting and Decorating

Construction and Building Technology



Pâtisserie and Confectionery

Social and Personal Services



Plastering and Drywall Systems

Construction and Building Technology



Plumbing and Heating

Construction and Building Technology



Rail Vehicle Technology

Transportation and Logistics



Refrigeration and Air Conditioning

Construction and Building Technology



Renewable Energy

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Restaurant Service

Social and Personal Services



Retail Sales

Social and Personal Services



Robot Systems Integration

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Software Applications Development

Information and Communication Technology



Software Testing

Information and Communication Technology



Unmanned Aerial Systems

Transportation and Logistics



Visual Merchandising

Creative Arts and Fashion



Wall and Floor Tiling

Construction and Building Technology



Water Technology

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology



Web Technologies

Information and Communication Technology



Welding

Manufacturing and Engineering Technology

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