

# **Crossing the New Digital Divide: Connecting to Mobile Economic Empowerment**

**A Nationwide Poll of African-Americans**

*Presented by Cornell Belcher*

*April 2016*

**MOBILE  
FUTURE**

brilliant  
  
corners  
Research & Strategies

Most African-Americans have **aCCeSS** to mobile connectivity.

Indeed, African-Americans over index as wireless **consumers**.

Yet the community lags  
in both **awareness** of and **participation** in  
the \$548 billion and 7 million jobs  
wireless innovation contributes each year to the U.S.  
economy.

We asked two questions:

**Why?**

**How Can We Bridge the Gap?**

## Key Findings

- 1. Despite overwhelming adoption of and enthusiasm for mobile technology, the African-American community has limited exposure to the economic opportunities that mobile tech makes possible.** Most African-Americans view mobile tech primarily as a **consumer tool (59%)** versus a means of **economic empowerment (24%)**.
- 2. Focused effort is needed to bridge the gap.** While millions of U.S. workers embrace the tech economy, many African-Americans are not aware of the economic opportunities being created by the industry. A majority of respondents (**53%**) identify **lack of skills and low awareness as the biggest barriers to pursuing mobile tech opportunities**. Respondents say **low cost training (47%)** and **relevant courses offered in communities (31%)** and **schools (26%)** would increase their interest in mobile tech.
- 3. Time to 'lean in' for women and girls.** Currently, African-American women are far less likely to be interested in mobile tech jobs. As an example, **while 45% of men expressed interest in becoming mobile app developers, just 31% of women said the same.**
- 4. Strong entrepreneurial spirit.** There is significantly more interest in mobile tech as an **entrepreneurial tool (48%)** than as a **career path (33%)**.
- 5. Personal experience matters.** Half of respondents (**50%**) say they do not know anyone in their community who works in the tech industry. Those who do are **56% more likely to express interest in being a mobile tech entrepreneur.**
- 6. More information leads to more interest.** After a brief discussion of mobile tech opportunities, **8% shifted** to express interest. A case study citing use of mobile tech for both economic gain and **community empowerment proved most persuasive (67%)**. **Millennial women (77%)** found the **flexibility** often associated with mobile tech jobs most compelling.

## Key Demographic Breakouts

- **Millennials:** Respondents ages 18-34
- **Millennial women:** Women respondents ages 18-34
- **Majority-minority neighborhood:** Respondents who say they live in a neighborhood where less than half of their neighbors are white
- **Shifters:** Respondents who were very or somewhat *uninterested* in pursuing a career in mobile tech or using mobile to start a business at the beginning of the survey, but shifted to very or somewhat *interested* in pursuing these opportunities after hearing more information in the survey
- **Frequent mobile users:** Respondents who say they access the Internet on their mobile phone multiple times an hour or multiple times a day

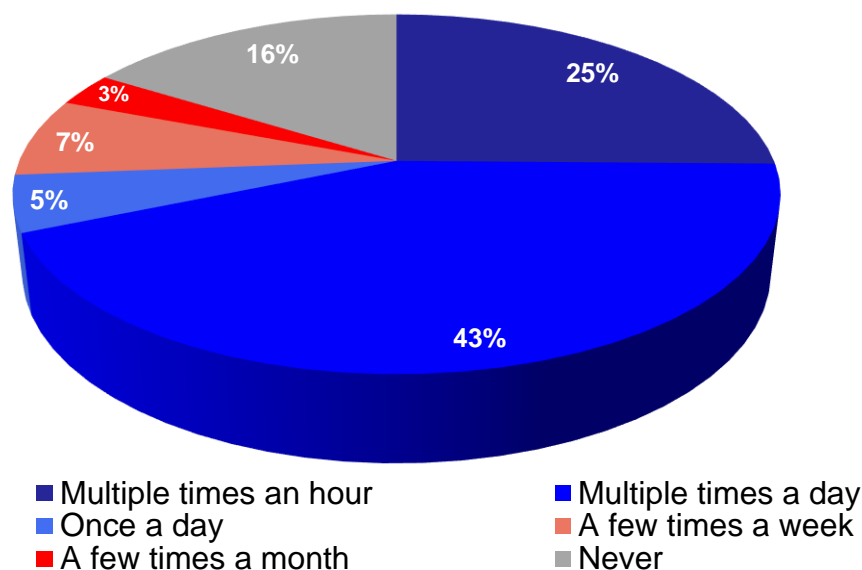
**African-Americans are major consumers  
of mobile technology.**

## 72% of Households Have 3+ Connected Devices

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	White neighborhood	Mixed neighborhood	Majority-minority neighborhood
Smartphone	82%	94%	93%	87%	82%	81%
Laptop computer	72%	79%	77%	77%	74%	70%
Tablet	65%	69%	76%	72%	68%	61%
Game console	52%	66%	59%	51%	57%	49%
Desktop computer	50%	48%	47%	55%	53%	48%
E-reader	34%	35%	29%	44%	36%	30%
Fitbit or wearable tech	19%	24%	23%	24%	26%	14%
None of the above	5%	2%	2%	3%	5%	5%
<b>3+ Connected Devices</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>69%</b>

Q: Which of the following devices do you or someone in your household currently own?

# 68% Use Smartphones Frequently

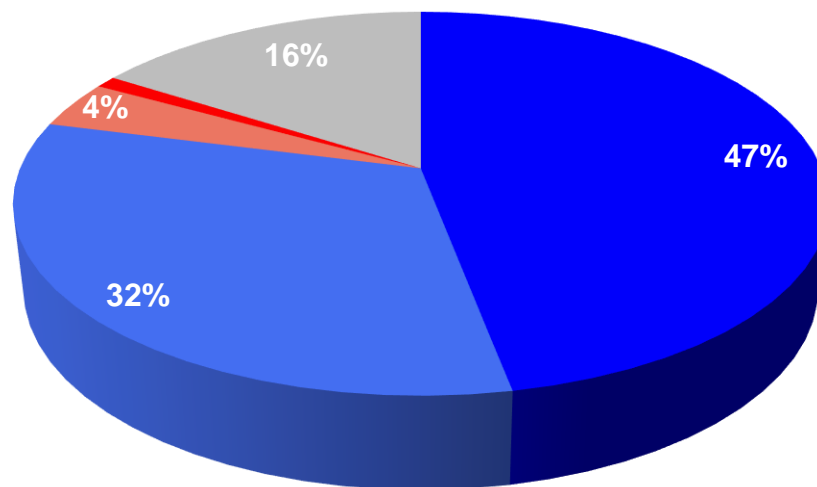


Q: How often do you use your smartphone to access the Internet (for example to check email, go online)?

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Frequently	68%	88%	91%	65%	67%	100%
Infrequently	15%	6%	6%	15%	13%	0%



# 79% Say Mobile Tech Makes Life Easier



■ Much easier      ■ Somewhat easier      ■ Somewhat harder  
■ Much harder      ■ No difference      ■ Dk/Ref

Q: Has mobile technology made completing your daily activities much easier, somewhat easier, somewhat harder or much harder or hasn't it made any difference?

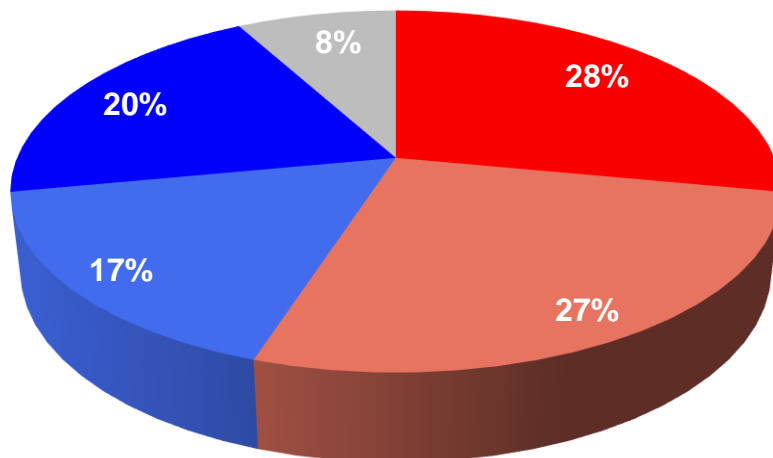
	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Easier	79%	81%	88%	79%	79%	91%
Harder	5%	7%	2%	6%	3%	4%





**Most respondents do not consider mobile tech  
as a path to economic opportunity—yet.**

# Majority Find it Difficult to Get a Job

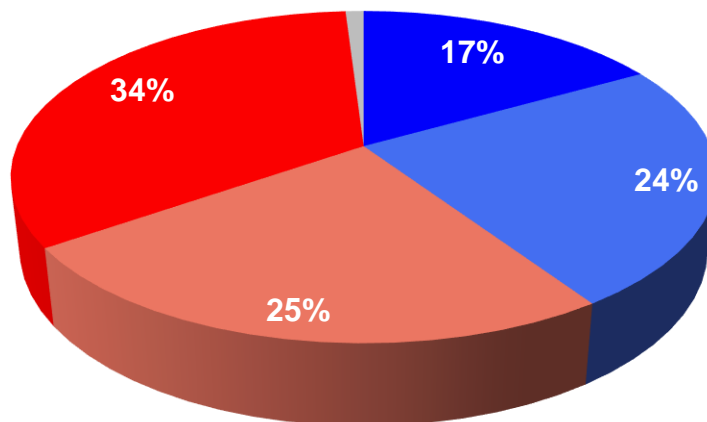


■ Very difficult     
 ■ Somewhat difficult     
 ■ Not too difficult  
■ Not at all difficult     
 ■ (Don't know/ refused)

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Total difficult	55%	58%	57%	60%	65%	54%
Total not difficult	37%	39%	39%	30%	28%	40%

Q: Generally speaking, how difficult would it be for you to get a full-time job in this economy, is it very difficult, somewhat difficult, not too difficult, or not at all difficult?

# 59% Initially Uninterested in Pursuing Mobile Tech Opportunities



■ Very interested     
 ■ Somewhat interested     
 ■ Not too interested  
■ Not at all interested     
 ■ (Don't know/ refused)

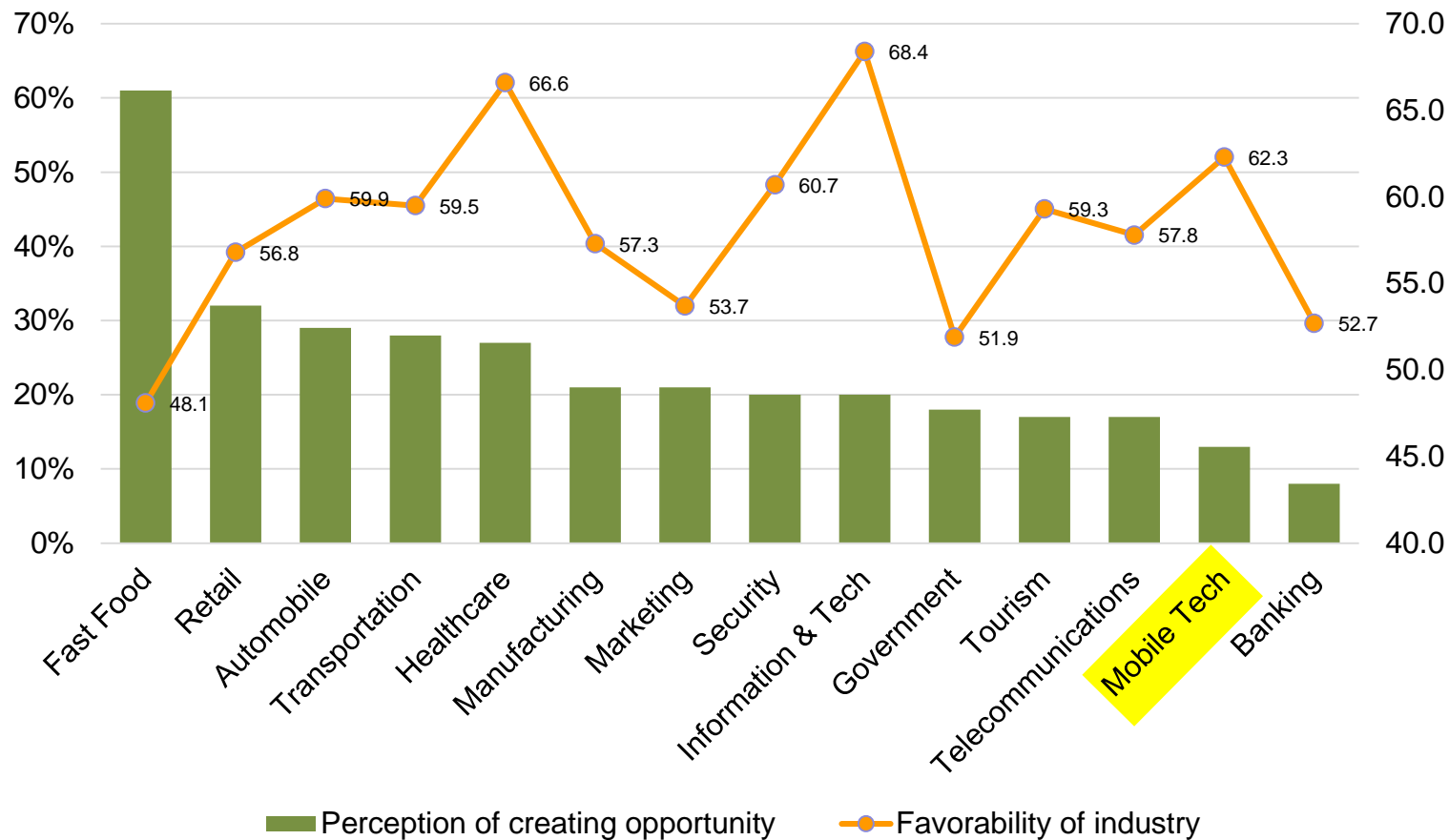
Q: How interested are you in pursuing a career in the mobile technology industry?

Q: How interested are you in using mobile technology to start or operate a company online?

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Interested	41%	53%	42%	39%	0%	44%
Uninterested	59%	47%	57%	61%	98%	55%



# Mobile Sector Viewed Favorably, But Underestimated as Driver of Opportunity



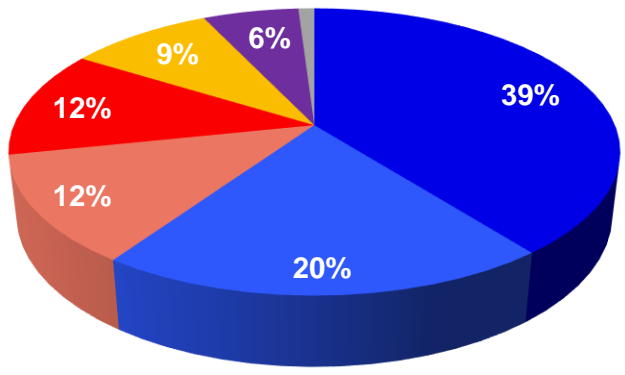
Q: Using a scale of 0-100, rate how much each industry is creating economic opportunity in the African-American community.

Q: Using a scale of 0-100, rate your feelings toward each industry.

## Mobile Tech Viewed Primarily as Tool for Consumer (Versus Economic) Empowerment

**Consumer:** Mobile technology has helped me become a better and more informed consumer.

**Economic:** Mobile technology has helped me create economic opportunities and make money.



- Much better (consumer)
- Somewhat better (economic)
- Both statements describe me
- (Don't know/ refused)
- Somewhat better (consumer)
- Much better (economic)
- Neither statement describes me

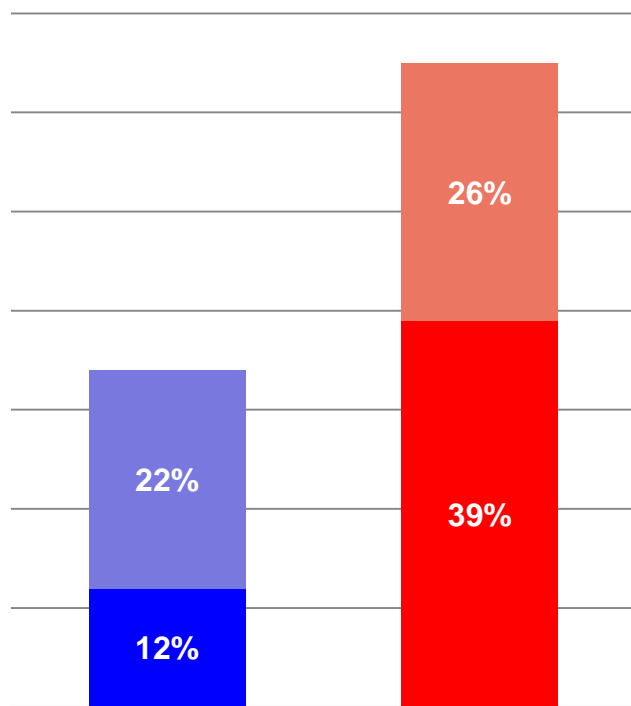
	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Total better – Consumer	59%	59%	62%	62%	67%	62%
Total better – Economic	24%	26%	25%	26%	20%	25%

Q: Which statement do you think most describes the way you use mobile technology?

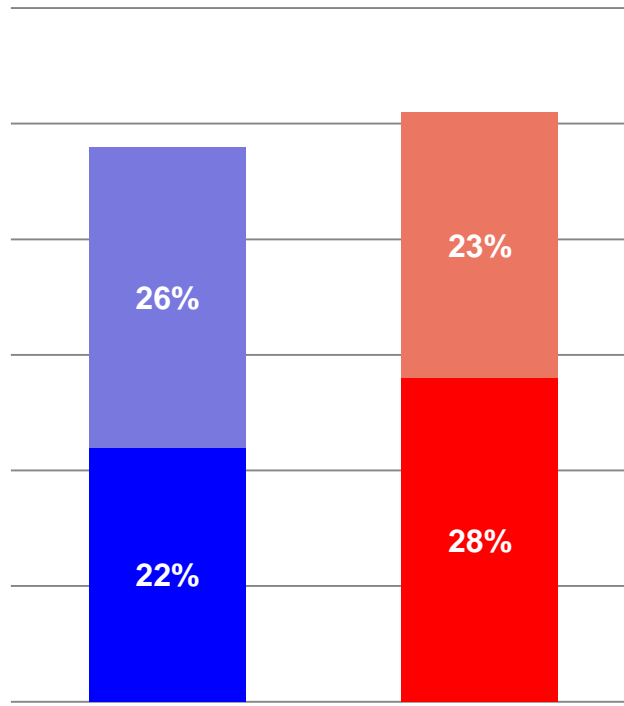


## Stronger Interest in Mobile Tech as Entrepreneurial Tool

Interest in career in mobile tech industry



Interest in mobile tech as entrepreneurial tool



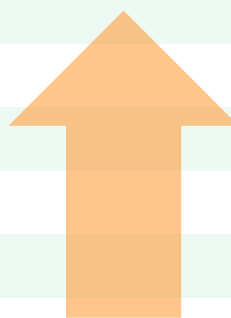
Q: How interested are you in pursuing a career in the mobile technology industry?

Q: How interested are you in using mobile technology to start or operate a company online?

**Bridging the gap means addressing race and gender.**

# Men Express Most Interest in Mobile Tech Opportunities

Use mobile for job/education activities	56%
Gen X men	55%
Use mobile for political/organizing activities	54%
Millennial men	52%
Know someone who started online business	52%
Employed Millennials	51%
Men under \$60k	50%
Millennials under \$60k	49%
Men non-college grads	49%
Mixed neighborhoods	47%
All men	47%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>41%</b>

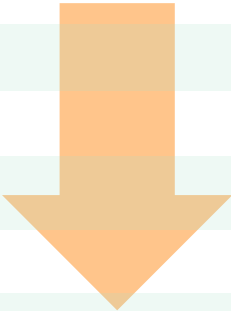


Some of the respondent groups demonstrated significantly higher interest in pursuing mobile tech opportunities.



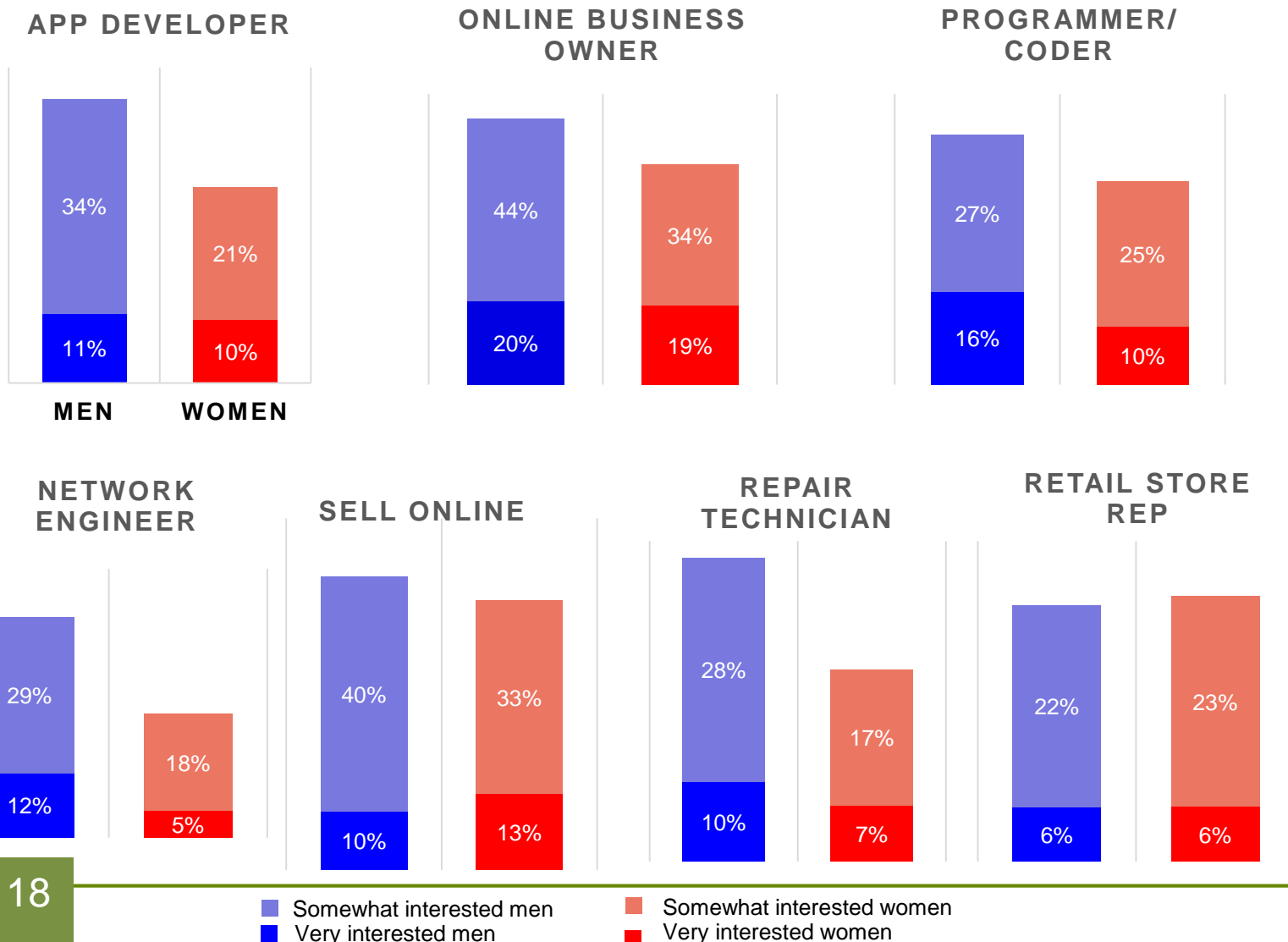
# ...Women and Seniors Express Less Interest

Age 65+	20%
Women age 45+	27%
Unemployed baby boomers	27%
Unemployed women	29%
Retired	29%
Women, non-college grads	33%
Post-grads	35%
All women	36%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>41%</b>



Some of the respondent groups demonstrated significantly lower interest in pursuing mobile tech opportunities.

# Significant Gender Gap on Interest in Mobile Tech Jobs



Q: I'm going to read you a list of mobile tech jobs. For each one, I'd like you to tell me how interested you would be in pursuing each type of job.

**What can make a difference?**

# The Challenge: Lack of Skills, Low Awareness of Opportunities

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Lack required skills or training	27%	24%	29%	24%	31%	28%
Unaware of opportunities	26%	26%	22%	27%	27%	27%
No others in community with these jobs	9%	11%	12%	10%	13%	9%
No interest in working in industry	5%	6%	5%	5%	2%	5%
Previous criminal record	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Too expensive to learn skills	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Takes too long to attain skills	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Other	4%	5%	5%	4%	2%	4%
All of the above	15%	18%	16%	17%	13%	16%
None of the above	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Don't know/ refused	5%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%

Q: Why do you think more people in your community are not taking advantage of mobile technology opportunities? (Pick one)

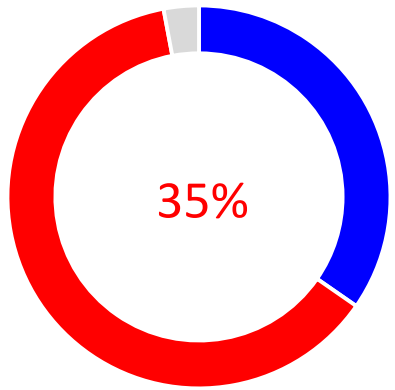
## Solutions: More Skills, Training, Personal Engagement

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Training on how to run your own business	65%	68%	72%	69%	71%	69%
Financial training to access capital to start or grow a mobile tech business	64%	65%	59%	67%	68%	68%
Exposure to career opportunities	64%	71%	72%	67%	65%	69%
Mentoring or guidance from other mobile tech professionals	63%	67%	71%	66%	68%	67%
Mobile business training to help manage or grow a non-tech business (eg. Hair Salon) using wireless technology	52%	55%	57%	58%	62%	56%
Technical training like coding	50%	58%	53%	55%	58%	54%

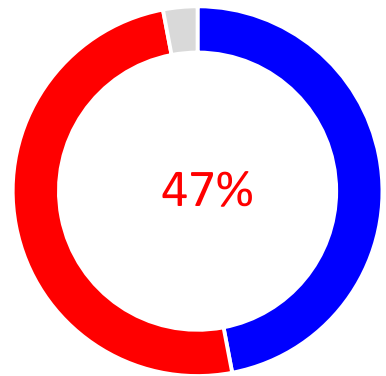
Q: I'd like to read a list of skills and training that have made others successful in the mobile tech industry. For each one, please tell me how important it would be to helping you or people you know pursue a career in the mobile tech industry.

# Most Lack Personal Exposure to Mobile Tech Industry

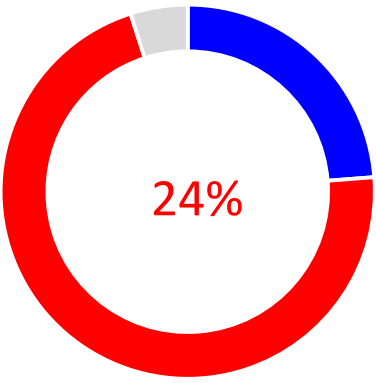
Started Online Business



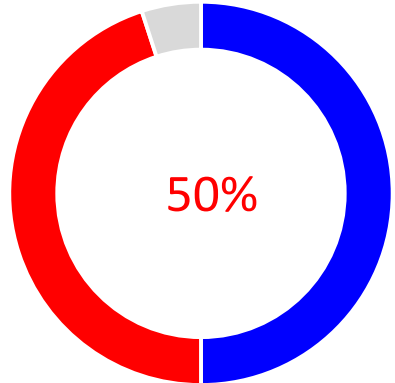
Worked in Tech Industry



Created Mobile App



Used Wireless to Grow Business

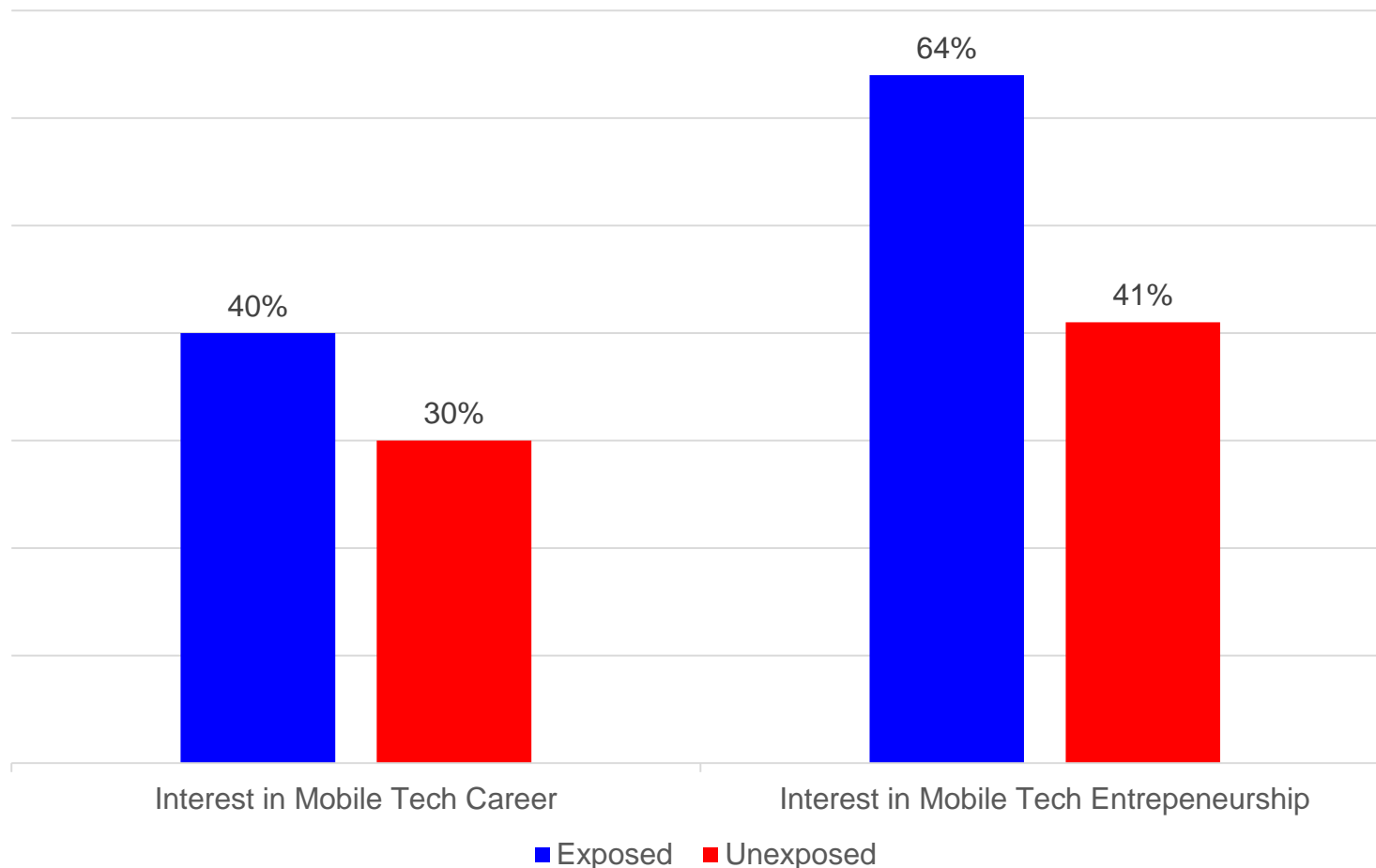


■ Exposed ■ Unexposed ■ Dk/Ref

Q: Have you or anyone you know from your community ever done any of the following activities?



## Personal Exposure Stokes Interest, Particularly in Mobile Entrepreneurship



Q: How interested are you in pursuing a career in the mobile technology industry?

Q: How interested are you in using mobile technology to start or operate a company online?

## Most Likely to Take Mobile Tech Classes if...

Q: Which of the following factors are most likely to increase the chances that you or members of your community would be willing to take classes to gain the skills required for the mobile technology field?

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
Classes were free or inexpensive	47%	51%	58%	47%	56%	49%
Classes were available in my community	31%	32%	31%	32%	30%	30%
Classes were offered to children at school	26%	26%	27%	26%	30%	26%
I was aware of the opportunity to take these classes	19%	27%	27%	22%	19%	21%
Classes didn't take more than two years	17%	17%	20%	17%	20%	18%
Classes took less than four years	12%	13%	12%	10%	13%	12%
Classes were available to people serving time	9%	7%	11%	10%	7%	8%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
All of the above	22%	20%	14%	24%	19%	23%
None of the above	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Don't know/ refused	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%



**Relatable examples also  
help make the opportunities real.**

# Community Empowerment Tops List of Relatable Stories that Spark Interest in Mobile Tech Careers

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
<p><b>[COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT]</b> Mobile technology can open up job opportunities that also help you affect change in the community. A first-generation college student who struggled navigating the college application process recently started BOLD Guidance, an app that helps students navigate college applications and deadlines through their mobile devices, making it easier for thousands of students in her community to apply for college.</p>	67%	70%	71%	71%	73%	69%
<p><b>[FLEXIBILITY]</b> Mobile technology can allow you to work anytime, anywhere. A local jewelry designer fulfills orders, pays her bills, and manages her supply chain right from her tablet. Her company's app and website allow her to sell her jewelry in fourteen countries from the comfort of her home.</p>	64%	70%	77%	66%	86%	69%
<p><b>[HIGHER WAGES]</b> A recent high school graduate worked low-wage jobs with no career path. After completing a two-year program at a local community college, she now works as a programmer in the mobile technology industry, making 65% higher pay and is excited about future career opportunities.</p>	64%	56%	56%	65%	70%	65%

Q: I want to read some stories about people from your community who have taken advantage of economic opportunities provided by mobile technology. Please rate how convincing you find each story in providing a reason to pursue a career in mobile technology.



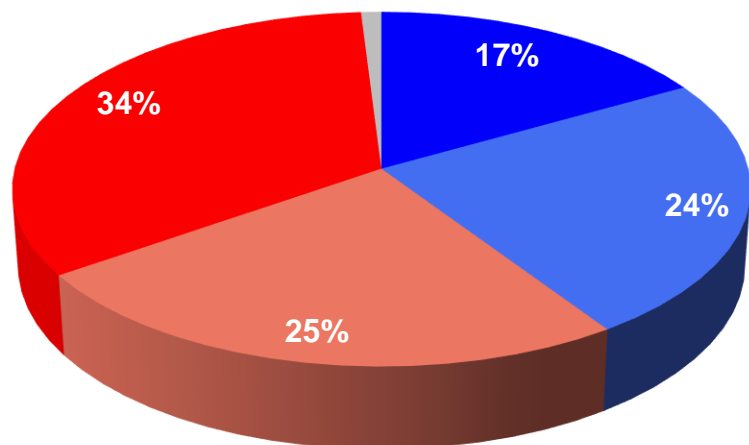
## Relatable Stories Spark Interest in Mobile Tech Careers (Cont.)

	Total	Millennials	Millennial women	Majority-minority neighborhood	Shifters	Frequent mobile users
<p><b>[ENTREPRENEURSHIP]</b> Mobile technology can help you achieve your entrepreneurial goals. A barber shop owner paid a developer to create an app for his shop and saw his business double in under a year. He used to miss calls on his landline and had a hard time scheduling his customers. He now uses his smart phone to schedule appointments, access his business' website, deposit checks, process payments and pay bills.</p>	61%	61%	68%	61%	67%	64%
<p><b>[SECOND CHANCES]</b> Some industries make it hard for people with criminal records to become employed, but mobile tech provides equal opportunity. One young man learned to code while incarcerated and now creates websites for people in his community. He works for himself and never had to be subjected to background checks.</p>	56%	54%	49%	60%	63%	59%

Q: I want to read some stories about people from your community who have taken advantage of economic opportunities provided by mobile technology. Please rate how convincing you find each story in providing a reason to pursue a career in mobile technology.

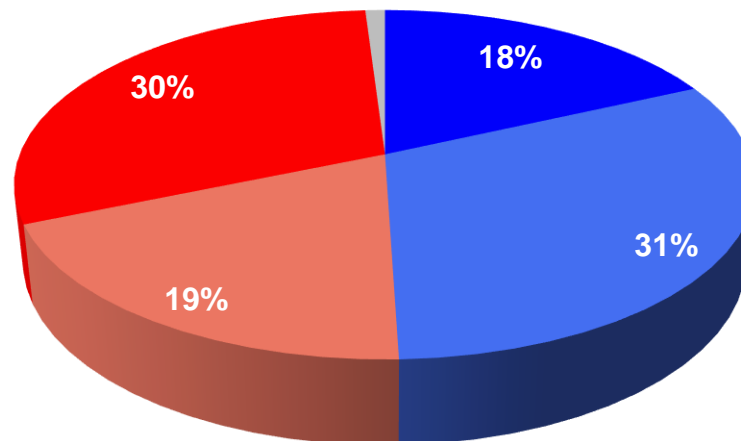
# Brief Exposure to Mobile Tech Opportunities Sparks 8% Increase in Interest

Initial Interest in Mobile Tech



	Total
Interested	41%
Uninterested	59%

Post Survey Interest in Mobile Tech



	Total
Interested	49%
Uninterested	49%

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not too interested
- Not at all interested

## Spotlight on Shifters: Increased Awareness = Increased Interest

	Total
Made more aware	18%
Growth in industry/ everyone has a phone now	15%
More money, more education	14%
Flexibility/ own business	14%
Enjoy technology	9%
Need a job, this is a good opportunity	8%
Interesting field of work	4%
Interesting/ creative/ different/ new industry	3%
Small learning curve to getting started	3%
Other	10%
Don't know/ refused	2%

Q: And what specifically has made you interested/not interested in pursuing a job in mobile technology industry?

*\*Asked only of respondents who switched from uninterested to interested.*

## Additional Findings

- 63%** of Millennials say mobile tech is extremely important for job hunting and networking
- 33%** of African-Americans express personal interest in pursuing a career in mobile tech, but **80%** believe “other people in the community” would be interested in these opportunities
- 72%** of Millennials say mobile technology is extremely important in keeping up with the news and current events
- 66%** of African-Americans say promoting social justice is made easier with mobile technology
- 61%** of Millennial women have used mobile tech to organize or participate in a protest
- 18%** of women expressed interest in pursuing a career as a network engineer (as compared **to 29%** of men).

## Methodology

These findings are from a proprietary survey conducted by brilliant corners Research & Strategies on behalf of Mobile Future. This nationwide survey consisted of 800 African-Americans, at least 18 years of age. The survey was conducted by phone, using professional interviewers starting on January 14, 2016 and ending on January 25, 2016. The survey's sample was drawn randomly from voter files and geographically stratified for proportional representation. The data was weighted slightly to adhere to population demographics of African-Americans. The margin of error overall is +/-3.5%, with a 95% confidence interval.