Global Hiring Outlook Strengthens for Q4 as Workforce Transformation Drives Demand for New Skills

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Employer hiring intentions rise six points year-over-year, with nearly two-thirds of those expanding headcount hiring for new capabilities and just one third replacing like-for-like skills

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 8, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Employers expect Global hiring momentum to strengthen slightly heading into the final quarter of 2026, according to ManpowerGroup's latest Employment Outlook Survey of 39,878 employers across 42 countries. The global Net Employment Outlook (NEO) for Q4 2026 stands at 29%, up two points from the previous quarter and six points from the same period last year.

Beneath the headline, the data points to a workforce in transition. Among employers planning to add staff, 62% cite changing roles and skills as the primary driver, including branching into new areas, new expertise demanded by advancing technology, and shifts in the skills their services require.

"This data demonstrates employers continue to place high value on human skills, even as the nature of work shifts with technological advancements," said Jonas Prising, ManpowerGroup Chair & CEO. "Nearly two-thirds of employers tell us they are hiring because the roles and skills their organizations need are changing – many are reconsidering the tasks within jobs rather than displacing full positions. Over the next five years, the defining challenge will be redesigning work at scale. The most forward-thinking employers are building the skills they need from both within and outside their companies – shaping agile workforces that can adapt as organizations seek to realize the true value of AI."

Forty-three percent of employers globally plan to increase staffing between October and December, compared with 14% anticipating reductions, while 41% expect staffing levels to remain unchanged. Expected decreases are driven more by a soft economic environment as opposed to AI or automation.

Entry-Level Hiring Holds Firm as AI Reshapes Early-Career Work
The survey also points to a more surprising finding on early-career hiring. Across every industry surveyed, more employers report increasing entry-level hiring than cutting it, with 45% adding early-career talent compared with 2025 against 20% pulling back. Where employers are scaling back, cost pressure and a lack of experience weigh more heavily than AI, suggesting automation is reshaping early-career roles rather than eliminating the need for them.

Changing Roles and Skills Drive a Growing Share of Hiring
While company expansion (39%) remains the single most common reason employers are adding staff, the survey shows that hiring is increasingly about transformation rather than growth alone. At the same time, 21% of organizations increasing headcount pointed to advancing tech, while 16% cite adapting to shifts in the skills their services require.

At the same time, 32% of employers adding staff say they are backfilling positions. Together, the findings describe a labor market in which employers are hiring to reshape their workforces, not simply to enlarge them, as the composition of roles and the skills behind them continue to change.

AI Has Yet to Make Hiring Consistently Faster
Despite increasing use of AI across recruitment, employers are not yet seeing a universal improvement in time-to-hire. Twenty-eight percent say their average time-to-hire has become faster compared with 2025, while 41% say it has remained about the same and 30% say it has become slower.

Sector and Regional Highlights

Sector Insights

- **Construction & Real Estate** and **Finance & Insurance** report the strongest hiring intentions for Q4 2026 at 36%, followed by **Information** at 35%.
- **Construction & Real Estate** posted the largest year-over-year improvement among sectors, rising 13 points.

Regional Hiring Plans

- **The Americas** posts the strongest regional hiring outlook at 36%, up two points quarter-over-quarter and 11 points year-over-year.
  - Brazil (53%), Panama (49%), Mexico (41%) and the United States (36%) report some of the strongest hiring intentions in the region, with employers in Panama posting the largest year-over-year improvement worldwide, up 26 points.

- **Asia Pacific** reports a 34% NEO, up six points quarter-over-quarter and three points year-over-year.
  - India leads all 42 countries surveyed at 54%, followed by Vietnam at 36% and China at 34%.

- **Europe and the Middle East** reports a 22% NEO, up five points quarter-over-quarter and five points year-over-year.
  - Employers in The United Arab Emirates (41%), Sweden (39%) and Israel (34%) report the region's most optimistic hiring plans.
  - Among the region's largest economies, the United Kingdom (23%) leads, followed by Germany (15%), and France

(13%).

To explore global hiring trends in detail, explore the complete Q4 2026 ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey.

The next survey will be released in December 2026, reporting hiring expectations for Q1 2027. The 2027 cycle marks the 65th anniversary of the ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey.

ABOUT THE SURVEY
The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey, now in its 64th year, is the most comprehensive, forward-looking employment survey of its kind, used globally as a key labor market indicator. The Net Employment Outlook (NEO) is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY
The data for the fourth quarter was collected between July 1–31, 2026. The findings are based on interviews with 39,878 public and private employers across 42 countries to measure anticipated employment changes and trends. The results reflect employer sentiment at the time of data collection and may not capture the potential impact of subsequent events. Size of organization and sector are standardized across all countries and territories to allow international comparisons.

ABOUT MANPOWERGROUP
ManpowerGroup® (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing, and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful, sustainable employment for millions of people across a wide range of industries and skills. Our expert family of brands – Manpower, Experis, and Talent Solutions – creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across more than 70 countries and territories and has done so for more than 75 years. We are recognized consistently as a best place to work for Women, Inclusion, Equality, and Disability, and in 2026 ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the 17th time; all confirming our position as the brand of choice for in-demand talent.

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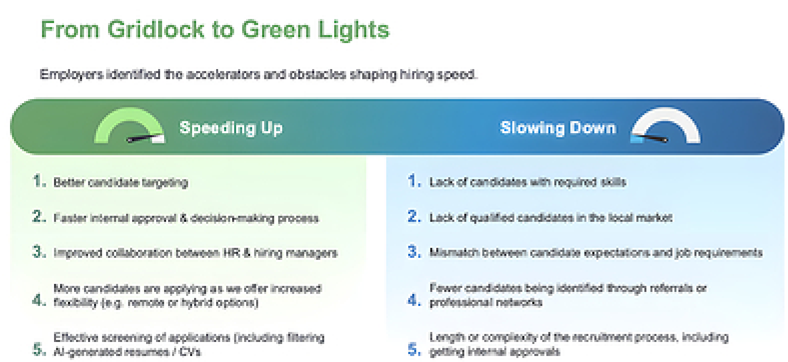
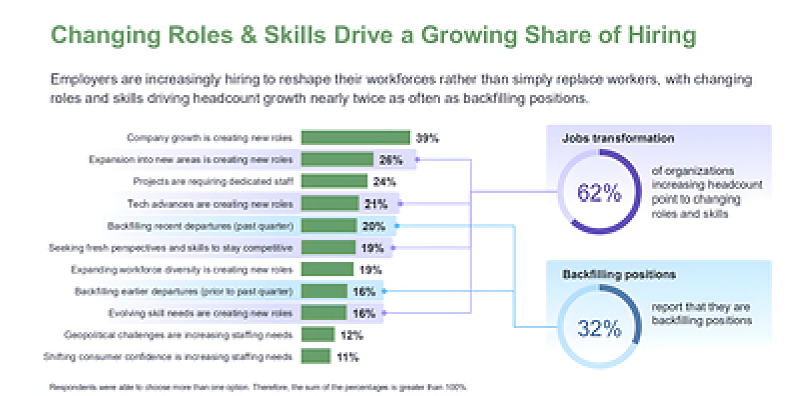
FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS
This report contains forward-looking statements, including statements regarding labor demand in certain regions, countries and industries, and economic uncertainty. Actual events or results may differ materially from those contained in the forward-looking statements, due to risks, uncertainties and assumptions. These factors include those found in the Company's reports filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), including the information under the heading "Risk Factors" in its Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2025, whose information is incorporated herein by reference. ManpowerGroup disclaims any obligation to update any forward-looking or other statements in this release, except as required by law.





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