

dexian®



Talent Trends Report

Q1 2026



RAPID SHIFTS IN THE WORLD OF WORK

The world of work is shifting faster than at any point in recent memory. Our 2026 Work Futures Study — drawing from an anonymous survey of more than 1,000 employees and 500 C-suite executives across industries — shows a labor market where technology and human expectations are accelerating at the same time. Employers are more confident than ever in their ability to adopt AI at scale, while workers are more vocal about the skills, flexibility, and trust they need to thrive. External signals echo this reality, and a recent article from Fast Company highlights three defining trends for 2026: the AI enhanced workforce, the rise of skills-based hiring and upskilling, and a stubbornly stagnant job market for new graduates. These trend predictions underscore that how organizations respond now will determine who wins in the talent market over the next several years.

One year ago, many leaders were still asking whether AI and automation would materially change their businesses. Our latest survey makes it clear that question has been answered. Most employers now say their organizations are very or somewhat prepared to adapt to technological advancements, and nearly half report that AI initiatives are already delivering the productivity gains they expected. At the same time, Fast Company's outlook on 2026 emphasizes that AI is not replacing work "wholesale;" instead, it is reshaping roles and workflows, making human-AI collaboration the new normal. Together, these signals show that the competitive edge will belong to companies that design work around human-AI

partnerships, not technology in isolation.

Beneath these trends lies a more delicate challenge: trust. While most employers in our [Work Futures Study](#) believe they communicate transparently about automation, workforce planning, and change, many workers are still unsure whether AI will be deployed fairly or whether the value exchange between employer and employee is truly balanced. Concerns about job security, pace of change, and ethical use of technology remain strong, even as workers embrace the need to reskill. This is the leadership test of 2026: pairing technological ambition with human-centered design, clear communication, and a genuine commitment to equity.

At Dexian, the takeaway is unmistakable. Technology alone will not deliver sustainable advantage. The organizations that lead in this next era will be those that align AI strategy with skills-first talent models, transparent communication, and a renewed commitment to trust. The goal is not simply to recognize the trends, but to act on them, to design work where AI augments people, skills open doors, and every employee can see a credible path to growth in an uncertain world.

I look forward to sharing more insights in next quarter's Talent Trends Report. I hope you find this report helpful in navigating the labor market and informing your hiring and retention efforts.

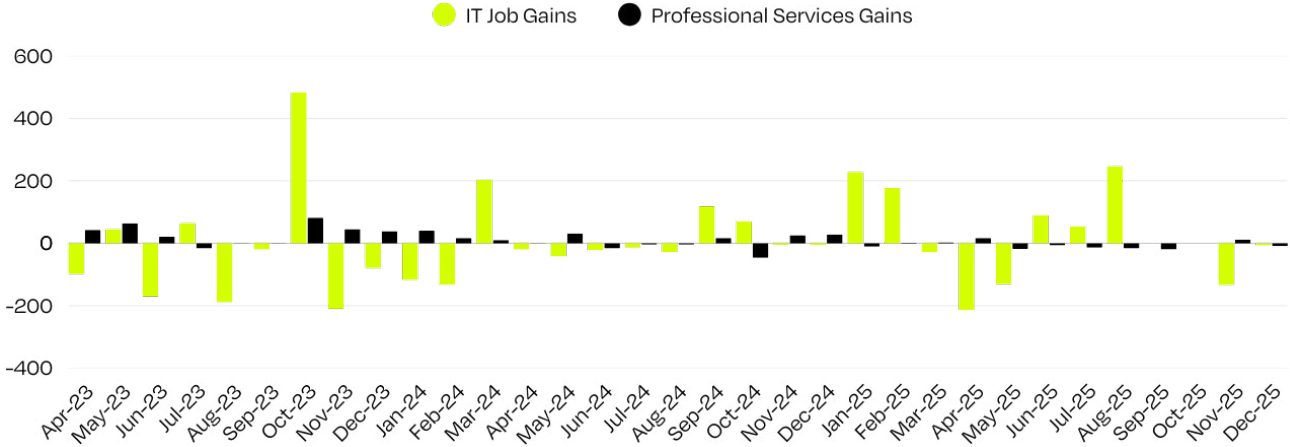
Maruf Ahmed, CEO

KEY NATIONAL LABOR DATA

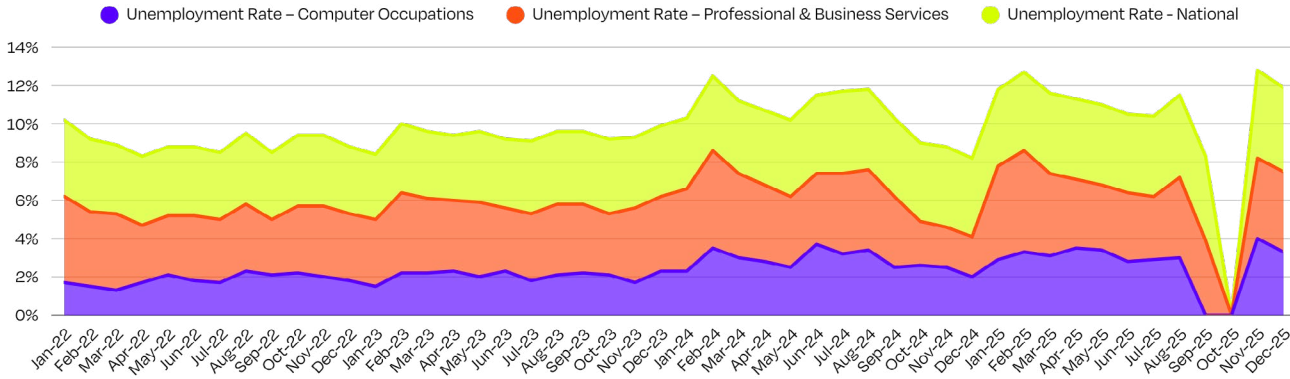
MONTHLY IT & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES JOB GAINS

The latest BLS Employment Situation report shows total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 50,000 in December, indicating job growth has slowed significantly compared with prior years. The unemployment rate edged down slightly to 4.4 percent, with gains concentrated in health care, social assistance, and food services, while retail trade shed jobs and most other major industries were little changed.

Sources: CompTIA, BLS



SECTOR & NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



Both the unemployment rates for tech occupations and professional and business services remain below the national unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for tech occupations dropped to 3.3% in December, compared to the national unemployment rate of 4.4%. More than 6.6 million workers are employed in tech occupations.

Sources: BLS, CompTIA

THE LATEST IN IT HIRING TRENDS

@Dexian

In December, IT employment declined 0.13% month-over-month according to TechServe Alliance, the national trade association of the technology staffing and solutions industry. On a year-over-year basis, IT employment was down 0.57% from December 2021, a net of 30,900 jobs.

Sources: TechServe Alliance

IT STAFFING EMPLOYMENT				
December 2025	TechServe Alliance IT Employment Index	Computer Systems and Design Services	Management and Technical Consulting Services	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
Number of Jobs	5,376,600	2,461,800	1,796,900	439,900
Change from Previous Month	-0.13%	+0.3%	+0.5%	+1.3%
Change from March 2024	-0.57%	+3.9%	+5.6%	+9.3%

IT SKILLS MOST IN DEMAND		
	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
1	Application Production Support	Application Production Support
2	JAVA Developer	JAVA Developer
3	System Engineer	.NET Architect
4	.NET Architect	SAP Developer
5	SAP Developer	.NET Developer
6	.NET Developer	System Engineer
7	Automated Tester	Workday
8	Workday	Help Desk
9	Network Engineer	Automated Tester
10	Other Application Developer	Product Manager

Sources: Dexian

FASTEST/LONGEST TIME-TO-FILL SKILL SETS	
Fastest	Slowest
Graphic Designer	PC Tech
Other BI Developer	Azure
SQL Server Developer	Python Developer
PHP Developer	Salesforce.com Developer
Big Data Developer	Cybersecurity Engineer
IT Audit	Director of Infrastructure
Mainframe Developer	Cable Technician
SAS Developer	Cloud Engineer
Database Developer	Hyperion Developer
Tableau Developer	Data Scientist

Sources: Dexian

UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS, TECH & COMPUTER-RELATED OCCUPATIONS		
Occupation	Unique Job Postings – Q4 2025	Change from Q3 2025
Software Developer	133,342	-5%
Software Quality Assurance Analyst	12,896	-10%
Computer Occupations, All Other	94,952	-14%
Computer Systems Analyst	23,806	-11%
Network and Computer System Administrator	19,813	-17%
Information Security Analyst	5,022	-25%
Computer and Information Systems Manager	7,933	+13%
Computer Programmer	3,966	-14%
Database Administrator	21,072	-10%
Computer Hardware Engineer	3,743	-13%
Computer Network Architect	22,451	-14%
Total/Average Change	356,929	-11%

Sources: Lightcast, Dexian analysis

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFFING TRENDS

©Dexian

PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT SKILLS MOST IN DEMAND

	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
1	Program Manager	Business Analyst – Technical
2	Business Analyst – Technical	Program Manager
3	Project Manager – Non-Technical	Project Manager – Non-Technical
4	Data Analyst	Data Analyst
5	Business Process Analyst	Accounting Management
6	Administrative Assistant	Administrative Assistant
7	Accounting Management	Business Process Analyst
8	Business Analyst – Non-Technical	Business Analyst – Non-Technical
9	Project Manager – App Dev	Call Center Support
10	Call Center Support	Project Manager – App Dev

Sources: Dexian

FASTEST/LONGEST TIME-TO-FILL SKILL SETS

Fastest	Slowest
Compliance	Automotive Mechanic
Configuration Manager	Cost Accounting
Financial Crimes	Learning Management
Tech Sourcer	Mortgage Services
Wealth Management Services	Office Management
Instructional Design	Release Manager
Agile Coach	System Analyst
Data Entry	Business Process Analyst
Inventory Management and Property Control	Debit & Credit Support
Motor Vehicle Operator	Content Management

Sources: Dexian

JOB POSTINGS ACTIVITY

Occupation	Unique Job Postings – Q4 2025	Change from Q3 2025
Call Center Agents	145,108	-14%
Recruiters	47,474	-12%
Administrative Assistants	80,075	-10%
General Clerks	4,850	-15%
Data Entry Clerks	6,089	-19%
Accounts Payable/Receivable Clerks	42,700	-12%
Financial Analysts	51,787	-7%
General Ledger Accountants	57,627	-17%
Compliance Specialists	23,207	-4%
HR Generalists	47,474	-12%
Accounting Managers	82,523	-6%
Total/Average Change	588,914	-12%

Sources: Lightcast, Dexian analysis

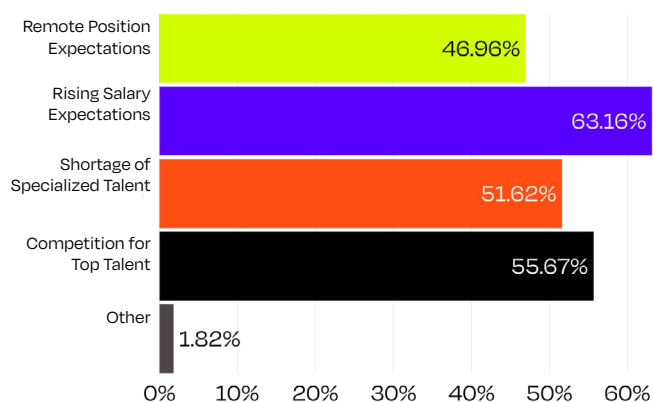
WORKPLACE TRENDS

Based on Dexian's latest research, the 2026 Work Futures Study, this will be a year of accelerated, structural change in work, rather than a return to stability after 2025's layoffs and AI experimentation. We see a persistently difficult labor market driven by skills mismatches rather than simple talent shortages.

Other key predictions include rapid AI driven role redesign, erosion of traditional management ladders, mainstreaming of side hustles, and career development becoming a primary retention lever. There is a growing importance of contingent and gig talent, the rise of AI driven coaching, and the need for HR leaders to embrace transparency, data driven decision making, and employee adaptability to build resilient, healthy workforces in this new environment.

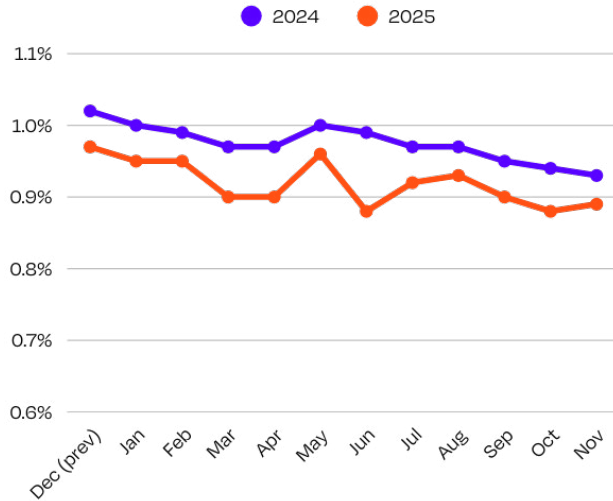
Source: Dexian's 2026 Work Futures Study

TOP HIRING CHALLENGES IN 2026



LATEST STATE OF HIRING IN THE U.S.

©Dexian



Nationally, across all industries, hiring in the U.S. was 1.5% higher in November 2025 compared to October 2025. National hiring was 3.5% lower in November 2025 compared to November 2024.

The industries with the most notable hiring shifts month-to-month in November 2025 were Utilities (9% higher); Manufacturing (5.7% higher); and Technology, Information, and Media (4.4% higher).

The cities with the most notable hiring shifts month-to-month in November 2025 were Detroit (7.4% higher), St. Louis (4.7% higher), and Denver (4.4% higher).