

Brief: Updated Blog

<https://hellopebl.com/resources/blog/global-hiring-trends-shaping-future-work/>

Purpose	
Audience	
New Blog / Updated Blog / Redirected Blog	Updated Blog (no slug change)
Add to Content Accuracy Log?	
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Linking Opportunities	• n/a
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SEO Title	Global Hiring Trends in 2026: Strategies, Tips, & Predictions Pebl
URL Slug	https://hellopebl.com/resources/blog/global-hiring-trends-shaping-future-work/
Meta Description	Explore global hiring trends across in 2026. See how companies are adapting to new work models, compliance risks, and the race for international talent.
PAA Box + Snippet	
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Drupal Resource Tags	Country Guides

Outline:

Update existing blog post about How to Hire Globally in 2026: Strategies & Tips.
This section should outline the emerging trends shaping global hiring in 2026, including AI-driven recruiting, shifting compliance requirements, and new workforce expectations. It should provide actionable steps, best practices, and realistic guidance to help companies source, evaluate, and onboard international talent efficiently and compliantly.

2026 Global Hiring Trends Shaping the Future of Work

12 July 2023

The business world changes fast. Just when you think you have something down, the rug is swept out from under you. Companies that adapt succeed; companies that don't fail.

Global hiring trends in 2026 look nothing like they did even a few years ago. The [remote work](#) experiment became a permanent policy, with [almost 100 million](#) professionals worldwide now following a hybrid work model (a near five-fold increase from pre-pandemic levels). Skills shortages hit industries that never saw them coming. And somewhere along the way, the best talent stopped caring about your office location and started caring about your mission.

Global hiring has fundamentally restructured how companies build teams. Austin fintech startups now staff entire AI engineering divisions across Mexico and Colombia. European sustainability employers recruit climate analysts from emerging Latin hubs like Argentina and Chile.

This shift separated companies into two camps. Some figured out how to hire globally without becoming bogged down by compliance. Others are still posting jobs on local boards, wondering why their talent pools feel so shallow.

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And the gap between these two groups is widening—fast.

But the most intriguing part? The trends driving global hiring are entirely different from what experts predicted. Some countries that seemed destined to become talent hubs fizzled out. Others emerged from nowhere to dominate specific industries.

Here's what actually happened, and what it means for how to think about building your global team.

Geographic trends reshaping global hiring in 2025

Hiring maps have been redrawn in recent years. Below are the location-based hiring trends that employers are prioritizing.

1. Latin America's software surge intensifies

Latin American hiring markets have gone from growing to exploding. [Mexico's IT services market](#) is projected to jump from \$21.28 billion in 2025 to \$37.28 billion by 2030. That's a compound annual growth rate of 11.9%. [More than half](#) of U.S. companies now plan to expand their nearshoring initiatives across the region, with Latin America now home to millions of software developers concentrated in [Brazil](#), Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia.

U.S. startups cite real-time collaboration plus salary [savings of 50% to 70%](#) as the twin reasons they pick Buenos Aires over Bangalore. Colombia and Mexico follow the same playbook, attracting VC dollars that reinforce the region's momentum. In fact, Mexico alone is home to over [560,000 software developers](#), and Guadalajara—home to 120+ startups and the country's first generative AI lab—is legitimately called "Mexico's Silicon Valley," with companies like Ness Digital Engineering planning to [hire 200+ professionals](#) there by the end of 2026.

2. Europe pumps the brakes

European employers have shifted into defensive mode. The eurozone labor market is projected to [grow just 0.6% in 2026](#) compared to 0.7% in 2025 (a seemingly small drop that translates to 163,000 fewer job openings). In Germany, over a third of companies plan to reduce their workforce this year, while France expects unemployment to climb to 7.8%, [reports DW](#).

The shift has spawned new terminology, like the "Great Hesitation," where businesses freeze hiring plans, and "career cushioning," where employees quietly prepare backup

plans in case of layoffs. Yet demand remains fierce in specific sectors, where healthcare, logistics, engineering, and specialized tech roles continue to face shortages even as broader hiring slows.

3. Alternative European hubs steal the spotlight

While everyone was paying attention to London and Berlin, other European markets were quietly becoming tech giants. There are still not enough people with the right skills in AI, data science, and cybersecurity, yet countries like Ireland expect 37% of their employers to hire more people in these tech roles in 2026. Portugal has become one of Europe's top places for innovation. Lisbon was named [European Capital of Innovation](#) in 2023, and still draws in both startups and investors from around the world.

Even smaller cities are doing well. Gothenburg's focus on sustainable technology and robotics has attracted companies like Einride and Northvolt. Denmark's Odense Robotics cluster, on the other hand, brings together [more than 130 companies](#) that work with automation and drones. Smart businesses want strong talent before the competition heats up, a better work-life balance, and costs that are more sustainable than those of traditional hubs. These markets offer all of these things.

4. Emerging markets create their own playbooks

[Emerging markets](#) aren't following Western hiring trends. They're inventing new ones. Brazilian recruiters have made WhatsApp their [primary hiring tool](#), while Kenyan companies integrate mobile payments directly into their recruitment process.

What's changed is the scale and sophistication. Latin America's nearshore tech talent has matured to the point where it's concentrated in markets with robust infrastructure and collaborative environments for digital professionals. Organizations using Latin American shared services report 20% to 40% cost savings while maintaining quality.

Companies adapting their recruitment to local [labor markets](#) while maintaining global standards see significantly higher quality hires. The lesson? Innovation isn't just happening in traditional tech hubs anymore. It's emerging from places that were forced to get creative with limited resources.

5. Asia-Pacific accelerates remote-first expansion

Not only are companies in the Asia-Pacific region hiring, but they're also expanding aggressively. [Recent data](#) show that Japan has the highest share of companies (85%) planning to hire full-time remote workers, followed by Australia (83%), South Korea (79%), and India (79%). India's hiring outlook sits at +52%, the highest in the region. Singapore has the most people working from home worldwide.

What remains true is the quality and diversity of roles. It's not just about call centers or basic IT support anymore. Asian markets are producing specialists in AI, biotechnology, and renewable energy who can compete anywhere in the world. The region plans to increase full-time employee counts [by at least 10%](#) over the coming year, with Australia seeing 55% of firms prioritize remote-first hiring models.

Employment models and workforce flexibility trends

The definition of "employee" keeps stretching. Teams now blend full-time staff, contractors, and [gig workers](#) who log in from four continents. These trends are shaping how HR teams are hiring.

6. Online gig work scales from niche to norm

The [World Bank](#) estimates upwards of 435 million people earn income through online gig platforms, representing 12.5% of the entire [global workforce](#)—and that number is projected to rise to [86.5 million](#) freelancers in the U.S. alone by 2027.

Passports and payroll systems no longer limit the talent pool you tap into. Designers in Lagos and copywriters in Lisbon can contribute to the same Slack channel tomorrow. What's clear in 2026 is the gig economy's permanence. [ADP Research](#) found that while only 1 in 10 workers participate in gig work in a typical month, a full 1 in 4 engage in some form of gig work by year's end—proving it's become a standard income supplement, not just a side hustle.

7. Hybrid work moves from perk to policy

[Six in ten workers](#) who have remote jobs prefer a hybrid schedule that mixes home and office time. But in 2026, the trend known as "[hybrid creep](#)" is happening.

Companies requiring full five-day office attendance are expected to [reach 30%](#), while

nearly half plan to require four or more office days per week, according to a recent ResumeBuilder.com survey.

According to the survey, organizations justify this shift with three reasons: strengthening company culture (64%), boosting productivity (62%), and maximizing office space investments (45%). The obvious downside is that companies pushing aggressive return-to-office mandates risk losing talent to competitors offering genuine flexibility.

8. "Work from anywhere" policies get a compliance reality check

ADP's [2025 Global Workforce View](#) notes that only 28% of North American employees now have complete freedom to choose where they work, down from 34% last year. Employers are tightening location rules to stay within tax and [labor law](#) guardrails.

Teams now map approved countries, run pre-hire tax checks, and partner with [global payroll](#) platforms. The upside? Fewer legal surprises and a clearer employee experience. In 2026, innovative companies are building [formal compliance readiness](#) frameworks that define remote eligibility by geography, establish approval workflows for relocations, and monitor nexus exposure across state lines. Without governance, unregistered payroll liabilities and unexpected tax obligations pile up fast.

9. Skills-based staffing accelerates but slower than expected

World Economic Forum research shows [56% of surveyed companies](#) plan to organize work around skills rather than job titles by 2027. Similarly, WGU's Workforce

Decoded Report revealed that [46% of employers](#) plan to expand skills-based hiring in 2026. But the gap between aspirations and execution is a challenge.

The reality is that [85% of employers](#) have adopted some form of skills-based principles into their hiring practices. The frequently reported struggle centers around implementation. But companies that can master it see real ROI, like [five-times more accurate](#) in predicting job performance compared to degree-based hiring. The future isn't degrees versus skills—it's using both more effectively.

10. Worker classification pendulum swings in the U.S.

On May 1, 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor ([DOL](#)) said it will not enforce the 2024 Final Rule on independent contractor classification. The decision points the federal system back to the more flexible "economic reality" test, which favors independent contractor status.

Global employers value the flexibility that U.S. freelancers offer. However, caution is advised:: The 2024 rule still applies to private litigation. California keeps enforcing its strict ABC test under AB5, and the IRS is ramping up audits using cross-agency data sharing. State tests vary, so HR leaders need to verify local rules to [avoid costly misclassification](#). The IRS can review cases for up to six years when there's significant underreporting.

Role-specific hiring trends: What jobs are in demand?

The job market has never moved this fast. While headlines shout about AI replacing workers, the reality is different; technology is creating entirely new categories of roles that didn't exist five years ago.

Companies aren't just hiring for traditional positions anymore. They're scrambling to fill roles that sound like science fiction but pay very real salaries. To highlight which roles are most in demand, we've pulled insights from LinkedIn's [Jobs on the Rise 2026 report](#)—released January 7th, 2026—along with current labor market data.

11. AI engineers dominate with unprecedented demand

AI engineers (also known as machine learning engineers) won the #1 spot on LinkedIn's 2026 fastest-growing jobs list. These specialists build everything from recommendation engines to autonomous vehicle systems, requiring skills in PyTorch, Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), and advanced prompt engineering. Salaries range from \$80k to \$130k+, with growth projections between 18% and 34% annually.

What's fascinating is that the barrier to entry has lowered. For example, you don't need a Ph.D. anymore, as many successful AI engineers come from bootcamp backgrounds or have pivoted from data science and software engineering. The hurdle most companies are facing is that they can't find enough trained talent, with AI engineering roles left vacant for months.

On a related note, you might also like: [How to Hire AI Engineers in Days—Not Months.](#)

12. AI consultants and strategists translate business into algorithms

While engineers build AI systems, someone needs to figure out what to build. That's where AI consultants and strategists come in, landing in the #2 fastest-growing role in 2026. These professionals bridge business strategy and technical execution, requiring skills in Large Language Models (LLMs), MLOps, and computer vision.

Previous roles that transition well include founders, software engineers, and product managers. These professionals understand both technology and business outcomes. Companies are moving beyond AI experimentation to full production deployment, which requires specialists who can design governance workflows, integrate models with proprietary data, and build evaluation systems.

13. AI and machine learning researchers create tomorrow's automation

Every company wants to add "powered by AI" to their marketing copy, but someone actually has to build those systems. AI/ML researchers ranked #5 on LinkedIn's 2026 list, focusing on cutting-edge work in deep learning, computer vision, and neural networks.

More than just programmers writing code; they're translating business problems into mathematical models that machines can solve. The best AI specialists think like both

engineers and psychologists. What's changed in 2026 is the emergence of specialized sub-roles like NLP and computer vision engineers and MLOps specialists focused on deploying and maintaining AI systems at scale.

14. Software developers remain an essential workhorse

While everyone chases the latest tech trends, software developers continue to be the backbone of digital transformation. The [World Economic Forum](#) forecasts 60% growth for software and applications developers through 2030. Every app, every website, every digital tool still needs someone to build it.

What's changed is the scope of what developers create. They're not just building websites anymore. They're crafting virtual reality experiences, designing autonomous vehicle systems, and developing tools that other AI systems use to learn.

15. Cybersecurity specialists guard the digital fortress, and they're paid accordingly

The average cost of a data breach worldwide is \$4.44 million, according to [IBM's latest report](#). In the U.S., it rose from \$9.36 million to \$10.22 million last year. More than 514,000 security analyst positions are available in the U.S., and that number is expected to grow anywhere between 29% and 33%.

Cybersecurity experts today do more than just set up firewalls and monitor network activity. They scour for threats, study how attacks happen, and build systems that can protect against threats that haven't even been imagined yet. As rules around [GDPR](#), HIPAA, and PCI DSS tighten worldwide, the focus has shifted to cloud security, AI-driven threat detection, and compliance management.

Strategic best practices for turning insight into action

As you explore global hiring in 2026, here are some useful strategies and best practices to consider:

- **Practice proactive compliance planning.** Map out which countries have the most complex payroll requirements pertinent to your business, and find resources/vendors with global payroll expertise. The sooner you invest in compliance infrastructure, the easier it will be to expand into other countries when an opportunity arises.
- **Explore skills-based assessment in your hiring process.** Evaluate candidates' capabilities instead of using their educational background as a benchmark requirement. This approach, on a global scale, uncovers talented individuals who would likely go unnoticed due to the degree requirements.
- **Consider diversifying beyond your primary talent market.** Embracing global expansion reduces your dependence on a particular geography and [expands your talent pool](#). A geographically diverse workforce also allows you

to distribute risk across different regions and provide better cost and time zone options.

- **Define your remote work stance clearly.** Establish what roles can be performed from home, and the expectations of that working dynamic. Defining your company's policies bhhhhhhhhhhhhnnnhelps candidates make informed decisions and avoid potential misalignment.
- **Stay aware of emerging talent needs in your industry.** Proactively develop a rapport in specialized talent pools before more competition creeps in. When you know what talent you'll need before the pressure hits, you can move fast once those roles become critical.
- **Look into nearshoring if time zones matter for your team.** Latin America, for instance, is an emerging talent destination that aligns with most North American time zones. [Synchronous collaboration between teams](#) and departments can lead to greater team cohesion for roles that require continuous communication.
- **Think strategically about contract talent.** Quality freelance talent can grow into long-term assets for your organization when you invest in developing their experience. Don't limit using contract workers solely as fill-in talent, but consider how they could enhance your permanent employees' ability to complete tasks.

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