Global Hiring Intentions Strengthen as Employment Outlook Hits Returns to 2022 Levels

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Latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey finds employers are predicting hiring plans at their highest level since Q3 2022, with a Net Employment Outlook of 31% for Q2 2026

MILWAUKEE, March 10, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Employer hiring intentions are strengthening heading into the second quarter of 2026, according to ManpowerGroup's latest Employment Outlook Survey of more than 41,700 employers across 42 countries. The global Net Employment Outlook (NEO) for Q2 2026 stands at 31%, up six points from the previous quarter and rising seven points year-over-year, marking its strongest reading since Q3 2022. The data for the second quarter was collected between January 1 and February 3, 2026, prior to geopolitical developments that began across the Middle East in late February. The findings reflect employer sentiment at the time of data collection and may not capture the potential impact of subsequent events.

While 45% of organizations plan to increase staff in Q2, 40% plan to maintain current headcount, and 13% anticipate reductions, improving three points from last quarter. Only 2% of employers remain unsure of their hiring intentions, down from 4% last quarter, signaling that economic uncertainty is beginning to ease.

"The data tells a nuanced story, with more employers hiring for expansion and to backfill roles, and fewer reducing headcount than we've seen in recent quarters. Yet the second-largest group remains those holding steady, watching the environment before they commit," said Jonas Prising, ManpowerGroup Chair & CEO. "Though current geopolitical uncertainty may contribute to more hesitancy, the direction is encouraging, and businesses have become used to navigating complex environments. The results demonstrate organizations continue to see human talent as a core component in the engine of growth while working to understand where AI genuinely adds value."

AI Adoption and Workforce Strategy
Beyond hiring intentions, the survey examined how employers are deploying AI across workforce strategy, finding widespread adoption but uneven returns.

Two-thirds of organizations (67%) are already using AI in hiring, onboarding, or training new workers. Adoption rises to 80% in Asia Pacific, with particularly high usage in China (95%) and India (87%).

Learning and development deliver the highest perceived return on investment from AI, cited by 27% of employers. Team performance (16%) and scheduling or forecasting (14%) follow.

However, expectations remain measured. Just 8% say AI fully meets expectations in hiring and training, while 16% report no positive ROI to date. Privacy and regulatory concerns (13%), insufficient company training (10%), and workers' lack of AI skills (10%) are the primary barriers to broader deployment.

Sector and Regional Highlights

Sector Insights

- Employers in **Information** (41%) and **Finance & Insurance** (35%) report the most optimistic hiring plans for Q2 2026.
- **Hospitality** (22%) signals the most cautious hiring intentions this quarter.
- In absolute hiring volume terms, **Information** and Trade & Logistics anticipate the largest net additions to headcount.

Regional Hiring Plans

- **Asia Pacific (APAC):** Leads globally with an Outlook of 39%, strengthening quarter-over-quarter and year-over-year. **Vietnam** joins the survey for the first time this quarter.
  - **India** (68%) leads regional and global hiring confidence, followed by **Vietnam** (47%), and Australia (33%).
  - **Hong Kong** (11%) reports the most cautious Outlook in the region.
- **The Americas:** Posts the second-strongest regional Outlook at 37%, reflecting improved hiring confidence across North America and Latin America.
  - **Brazil** (55%) leads regional confidence, followed by **Panama** (44%) and **Costa Rica** (43%). The **United States** (38%) reflects resilient labor demand.
  - **Colombia** (18%) reports the most cautious hiring intentions in the Americas this quarter.
- **Europe and the Middle East:** Reports the lowest global Outlook at 23%, up modestly quarter-over-quarter.
  - The **United Arab Emirates** (60%) leads the region, followed by **Sweden** (39%) and the **Netherlands** (37%).
  - **Romania** (-5%) and **Slovakia** (3%) report the weakest Outlooks globally this quarter.

To explore global hiring trends in detail, view the full Q2 2026 ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey at: https://www.manpowergroup.com/en/insights/q2-2026-manpowergroup-employment-outlook-survey

The next survey will be released in June 2026, reporting hiring expectations for Q3 2026.

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
Survey responses were collected from January 1 and February 3, 2026. 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 2025 ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the 16th time; all confirming our position as the brand of choice for in-demand talent.

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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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