

Global Hiring Outlook Holds Steady in Q3 With Mid-Size Employers Showing Most Optimism

June 9, 2026 at 9:31 AM EDT

Employers cite economic uncertainty, above AI, as the key driver of hiring caution, while many continue to hire selectively for growth

MILWAUKEE, June 9, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Global hiring momentum remains steady year-over-year yet shows caution quarter-over-quarter, according to ManpowerGroup's latest [Employment Outlook Survey](#) of more than 40,500 employers across 42 countries. The global Net Employment Outlook (NEO) for Q3 2026 stands at 26%, down five points from the previous quarter, though up two points from the same period last year. Outlooks weakened in 33 of 42 countries compared to last quarter.

Yet beneath the headline number, a more complex picture is emerging. Mid-size organizations (250–999 employees) report the strongest hiring intentions globally at 32%, alongside the largest year-over-year gains (+6 points), outpacing both small businesses and large enterprises.

"What the data this quarter reveals is a labor market navigating uncertainty while pursuing selective opportunity," said Jonas Prising, ManpowerGroup Chair & CEO. "Economic uncertainty, more than AI itself, is emerging as the primary driver of caution, particularly across Europe, Asia, and large enterprises. At the same time, many employers are continuing to hire selectively for the skills that will help them transform their businesses, accelerate productivity, and prepare for long-term growth. The organizations moving forward most confidently are those aligning their people strategy with their technology strategy."

While 42% of organizations plan to increase staff in Q3, down from 45% last quarter, 40% plan to maintain current headcount and 16% anticipate reductions. Anticipated hiring increases are driven primarily by company expansion; expected decreases are fueled by economic challenges.

AI Drives Productivity Gains, But Human Judgment Remains the Most Valued Hiring Tool

AI continues to reshape how organizations think about productivity and the workforce, and the Q3 data shows employers aren't ready to hand over the keys to AI entirely.

Despite growing AI adoption, a person reviewing resumes (57%) remains the most valued hiring resource, ranked above all AI and automated tools:

- Automated status update and communication tools: 48%
- AI-assisted job description writing: 46%
- AI-driven resume screening, parsing, and sourcing: 44%
- AI-enhanced tools helping workers understand their skills, career paths, and opportunities: 43%
- Always-on AI solutions matching people and roles, with final human oversight: 41%

At the same time, as employers navigate AI integration, the people skills commanding the highest premiums reveal where human value is concentrating:

- Communication, collaboration, and teamwork: 72%
- Critical thinking and problem-solving: 68%
- Professionalism and work ethic: 68%
- Adaptability and willingness to learn: 68%
- Time management and prioritization: 64%

Sector and Regional Highlights

Sector Insights

- Even traditionally resilient sectors are feeling the pull of a more cautious environment, though some are holding their ground more than others.
- **Information** (32%) and **Construction & Real Estate** (31%) report the strongest hiring plans for Q3 2026, followed by **Finance & Insurance** (29%).
- **Utilities & Natural Resources** posted the strongest year-over-year improvement, up eight points, signaling selective areas of renewed demand.
- **Hospitality** (14%) reports the most cautious hiring plans this quarter, the sector's lowest reading since Q3 2021.

Regional Hiring Plans

- Year-over-year trends reveal a widening geographic divide. The Americas is the only region to strengthen compared to the same period last year, while Europe and Asia Pacific, regions with greater exposure to energy cost pressures linked to ongoing geopolitical instability, are seeing the steepest declines in employer confidence, both quarter-over-quarter and year-over-year.
- The Americas posted the most resilient regional outlook this quarter, declining just three points quarter-over-quarter while improving seven points year-over-year; the only region to strengthen on an annual basis. Puerto Rico (48%) and the United States (45%) are among the global leaders in hiring confidence. Brazil (37%) also posts a strong result.

- Asia Pacific posts a 28% NEO, down 11 points quarter-over-quarter and one point year-over-year. India (48%) leads global hiring confidence, while China (33%) and Vietnam (28%) remain positive.
- Europe and the Middle East reports the weakest regional outlook at 16%, down seven points quarter-over-quarter and three points year-over-year. The United Kingdom (37%) is a regional standout, while Slovakia (-6%) and Romania (-12%) post the weakest results globally.

To explore global hiring trends in detail, explore the complete [Q3 2026 ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey](#).

The next survey will be released in September 2026, reporting hiring expectations for Q4 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

The data for the third quarter was collected between April 1–30, 2026. The findings are based on interviews with 40,592 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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Employer Expectations



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The Most In-Demand Technical Skills



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The Most Valuable Soft Skills

-  Communication
-  Problem-solving
-  Strong work ethic
-  Adaptability
-  Time management

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