

High-skilled Job Report for October 2025

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Summary

Every month, Toptal analyzes month-over-month trends in the broad global and US job markets, as well as trends that apply more specifically to experienced technology and professional services personnel like those in the Toptal Talent Network. Given that Toptal itself is a fully distributed company and the Toptal Talent Network is a remote workforce, we filter job posting data for remote or hybrid positions whenever possible. We focus in particular on areas of expertise most closely aligned with those of the network, specifically data science, design, development, finance, information security, management consulting, marketing, product management, project management, and sales.

Toptal has developed a unique scoring system, the Toptal Market Strength Score, which represents specific demand for remote or hybrid technology and professional services talent with five or more years of experience. The scores are based on the number of new job postings, median offered compensation in those postings, and actual hiring activity, as reported by Lightcast.

Toptal Market Strength Scores

Toptal Market Strength Scores apply to remote and hybrid technology and professional services roles that require five or more years of experience. Below is a summary of the market strength scores discussed in this report. Click the links for more details about each area of expertise.

TRENDS BY AREA OF EXPERTISE	MARKET STRENGTH SCORE	
	MoM	YoY
Data Science Expert Trends	-7% 	+23% 
Designer Trends	-14% 	-24% 
Developer Trends	+5% 	+24% 
Finance Consultant Trends	+2% 	+22% 
Information Security Expert Trends	-7% 	-23% 
Management Consultant Trends	-6% 	-13% 
Marketing Expert Trends	+4% 	+18% 
Product Manager Trends	+13% 	+21% 
Project Manager Trends	+5% 	-9% 
Sales Expert Trends	-1% 	+15% 

The market strength score includes job listings, compensation, and hiring for full-time, part-time, and hourly roles. Note: Scores for product manager roles are more volatile due to differences in the available data.

 Poor <-15% Change  Moderate -15% to +15% Change  Strong >+15% Change

Overall Toptal Market Strength Score Results

As of the end of October 2025, the combined Toptal Market Strength Score for the remote and hybrid technology and professional services job market **decreased 0.7% month over month**, but **increased 12.1% year over year**, for scores of **Moderate**.



-0.7%

Month-over-month combined Toptal Market Strength Score for the remote and hybrid technology and professional services job market
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

The month-over-month score was influenced by a minor increase in stated demand for technology and professional services personnel, as defined by job postings and offered compensation, as well as a small decrease in actual hiring activity. Based on data reported by Lightcast, hiring fell by an average of 8% month over month across all of Toptal's areas of expertise combined, but remained up 14% year over year.

The minor month-over-month downward trend follows two quarters of accelerating hiring activity, and because shorter time periods make for more volatile trends, **it is important to consider all month-over-month trends presented here in the context of their accompanying year-over-year changes.**



+12.1%

Year-over-year combined Toptal Market Strength Score for the remote and hybrid technology and professional services job market
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

As in prior reports, specific trends vary across areas of expertise, time commitments (i.e., full-time, part-time, and hourly positions), and experience level, which we discuss at length in this report. (See [Demand Trends by Toptal Talent Area of Expertise](#) for more details.)

Due to the rise of “ghost job” postings—roles that employers advertise for the sake of appearance and to gather market intelligence, without real intent to hire—Toptal's Market Strength Scores equally weight stated demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, and actual hiring activity.

The practice of posting ghost jobs has long existed but became markedly more frequent during the second half of 2024 with [81% of recruiters](#) admitting to doing it. Ghost job postings make the general market demand less directly comparable with Toptal's client demand, where nearly all job postings are made with the intent to hire immediately.

Broader Job Market Trends

In addition to calculating the Toptal Market Strength Scores and analyzing data that closely aligns with professional profiles in the talent network, Toptal also monitors workforce activity in the wider US and global markets. Trends for the general job market were for the most part less positive. New postings for all professions and levels of experience fell in the US and most other large economies, both month over month and year over year, according to [Indeed Hiring Lab](#) data.

Trends in the general technology job market have also dipped. Postings for all positions and levels of experience on startup-focused [Hacker News Hiring](#) decreased 1.3% month over month and 6.7% year over year. Although technology layoffs decreased 28% in Q3 of 2025, according to data from [Layoffs.fyi](#), the minor stabilization was temporary, and a workforce reduction of [14,000 people at Amazon](#) increased tech layoffs by 120% month over month versus September.

This broader market data indicates that while demand for experienced remote and hybrid technology and professional services talent has started to rebound from the market low in Q4 2023 (see [Aggregate Demand for Toptal-relevant Positions, Q3 2021–Q3 2025](#) for an illustration of this trend), the general US and global job market has yet to begin its full recovery. One reason that demand for Toptal-relevant roles generally outperformed the broader market is that AI adoption is impacting junior positions a great deal more than mid- and senior-level ones. (See [Trends in the Global and US Job Market](#) for more details.)

Introduction

This October 2025 report analyzes technology and professional services job market trends, including demand for remote or hybrid professionals in data science, design, development, finance, information security, management consulting, marketing, product management, project management, and sales. Toptal typically services clients that need specialized professional talent with five or more years of experience; most of the data presented in this report applies to that professional profile, unless specifically stated otherwise.

The purpose of this report is to provide the clearest, most direct, and most actionable information to professionals in the technology and professional services fields on the nature of the demand for their services. It avoids speculation and jargon, and doesn't focus on broader macroeconomic matters outside of how they impact immediate trends in demand.

In the following pages, we present the market conditions as of the end of October 2025. The first half of the report provides overall market context, beginning with the broadest trends; the second half describes more specific trends for each area of expertise.

The statistics in this monthly report are preliminary and subject to revision and updating. The source data changes in real time, including on a historical basis, and may shift slightly between early November 2025, when the calculations were done, and the time of publication. This is common with indices of this kind and typically does not materially affect the trends and major findings. Source hyperlinks generally lead to organizations' homepages or data landing pages; all calculations were performed by Toptal. (See the [Appendix](#) for more details on our methodology and analysis.)

While considering the month-over-month metrics presented here, keep in mind that shorter-term metrics are more sensitive to smaller trends and seasonality.



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As I noted in our [Q3 report](#), the current market cannot be viewed simply in terms of being ‘up’ or ‘down.’ Rather, it must be viewed through the lens of transition; a transition that entails a reshuffling of the skills that are most in demand as well as market friction between supply and demand. This transition has brought bright spots, as well as severe difficulties.

The results discussed in this month-over-month analysis continue that theme and highlight the natural volatility of shorter-term metrics (i.e., month-over-month versus year-over-year numbers), as well as the true volatility of the present moment. This report includes many dramatically positive and negative trends, which at first can appear contradictory. But both come from the same root cause: an underlying instability as organizations continuously recalibrate demand, hiring, and layoffs in the face of rapidly changing technology, macro forces, and—as of the time of publication—a slowdown in the release of many official economic statistics due to the US government shutdown.

Volatility presents significant challenges to organizations looking to gain clarity on the direction of their most important projects, and for professionals seeking employment. Moments of profound change such as this one do, however, also allow for opportunities when approached in the spirit of proactive experimentation. The magnitude of the strain and difficulty this transition brings is significant. But organizations that systematically foster optionality through rapid experimentation will be rewarded, as will individuals who pursue continuous learning, especially if they focus on the ability to place their specific skills in the context of larger business strategy.

Many calculations in this report are based on highly targeted data, which, on a monthly basis, will naturally show considerable fluctuation. As you read the analyses herein, be sure to keep the perspective of the larger context, and focus on the bright spots and the opportunities they offer.

Erik Stettler
Toptal Chief Economist



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Across the market in October, companies struck a balance between innovation and operational discipline. While AI, LLMs, and cybersecurity continued to drive investment, organizations also strengthened core systems through ERP implementations and scalable infrastructure projects. This shift increased the demand for flexible talent who can adapt quickly and bridge the gap between process efficiency and innovation, ensuring businesses continue to grow sustainably even in leaner conditions.

Hari Mahadevan
AVP of Talent Operations, Toptal

Trends in the Global and US Job Market

The data we consider in this section indicates that, while the overall global and US job markets have more recently softened, demand for experienced remote or hybrid technology and professional services personnel has been increasing over the last two years.

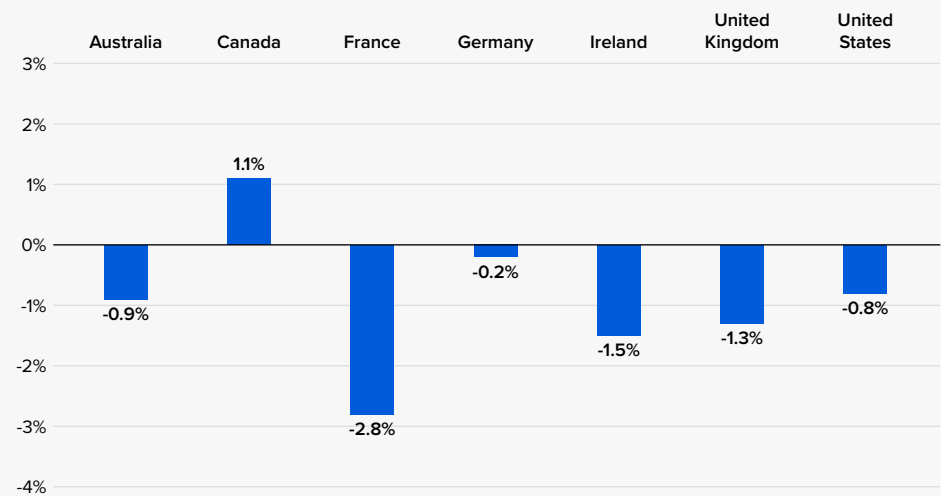
In this section, we discuss month-over-month and year-over-year trends in the broad global and US job markets, as well as trends that apply more specifically to experienced technology and professional services personnel like those in the Toptal Talent Network. We will start with the broadest global trends first, then narrow our focus to trends in the global technology market, hiring trends in the US for certain sectors, and then to the trends most specific to Toptal’s network and areas of expertise.

Broad Global Demand Trends

Most Large Economies Experience Month-Over-Month and Year-Over-Year Reductions in Job Postings

The chart below shows the month-over-month change in the number of job postings for all professions and all levels of experience in the US and other countries with comparable available data for October 2025.

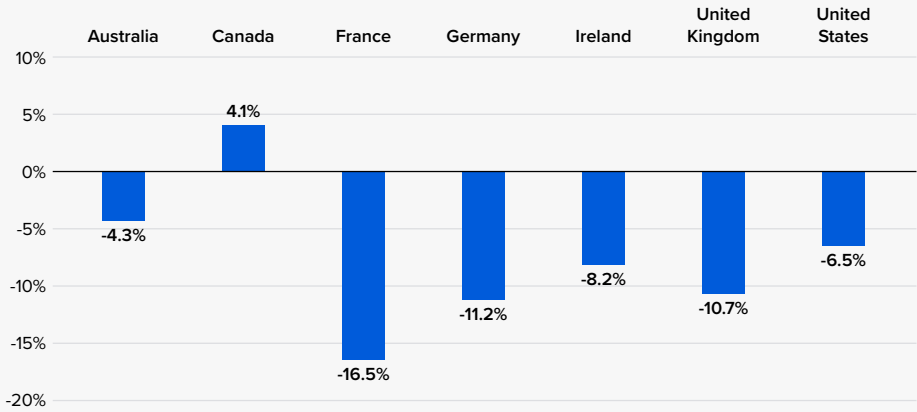
Month-Over-Month Change in Job Postings in US and Other Large Economies



Source: Toptal, based on [Indeed Hiring Lab](#) data

Most economies show slight decreases in job postings, ranging from 0.2% for Germany to 2.8% for France. Canada provides the only exception, with an increase of 1.1%. The next chart shows year-over-year trends.

Year-Over-Year Change in Job Postings in US and Other Large Economies



Source: Toptal, based on [Indeed Hiring Lab](#) data

Job postings in all countries were down year over year with the exception of Canada, which showed a 4.1% increase.

While the market for Toptal-relevant positions—defined as remote or hybrid technology and professional services roles that require five or more years of experience—has shown evidence of improvement and stabilization from the market low in Q4 2023, the broader job market has yet to begin its full turnaround.

The two previous charts speak to the market for jobs in all professional areas, whether remote, hybrid, or in-person, and should therefore be taken as broad context for the more specific data we share from here on. We now turn to the market trends for technology talent, and then to roles in Toptal’s areas of expertise more specifically.

Global Demand Trends: Technology

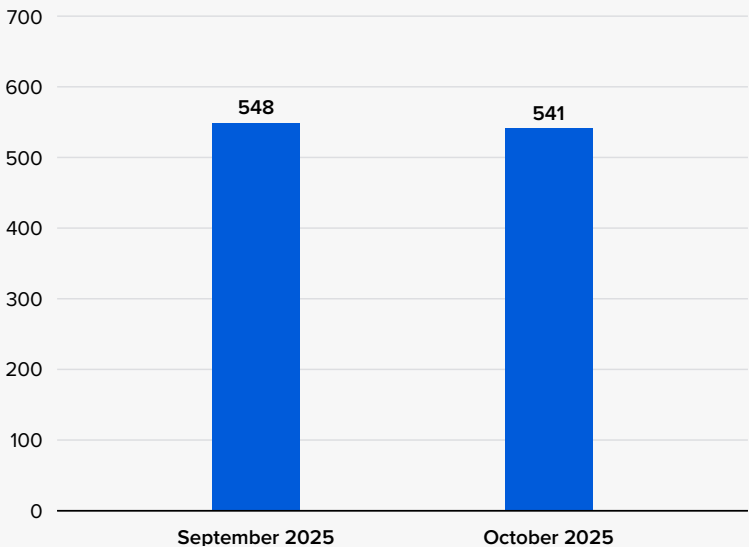
In this section, we discuss changes in the number of job listings for technology positions, the number of hires made, and global technology layoffs.

Technology Job Listings Edge Down for the Broader Market

As a leading platform for news and talent sourcing, Hacker News is a bellwether of job posting trends for technology professionals. Because of its relationship with the prestigious accelerator Y Combinator, its job postings are heavily representative of developer positions and employers that are either current or former startups, or otherwise heavily technology-driven in their business models. As a niche platform specific to technology and the startup community, it is likely less affected by ghost job postings than broader platforms with higher general marketplace visibility and larger pools of users. The chart below shows the minor 1.3% month-over-month decrease in technology job postings on that site, which follows a 7.5% quarter-over-quarter decrease during Q3. These roles include all experience levels and work models (i.e., remote, hybrid, and in-person).

Month-Over-Month Change in Global Technology Job Postings on Hacker News

-1.3% | 

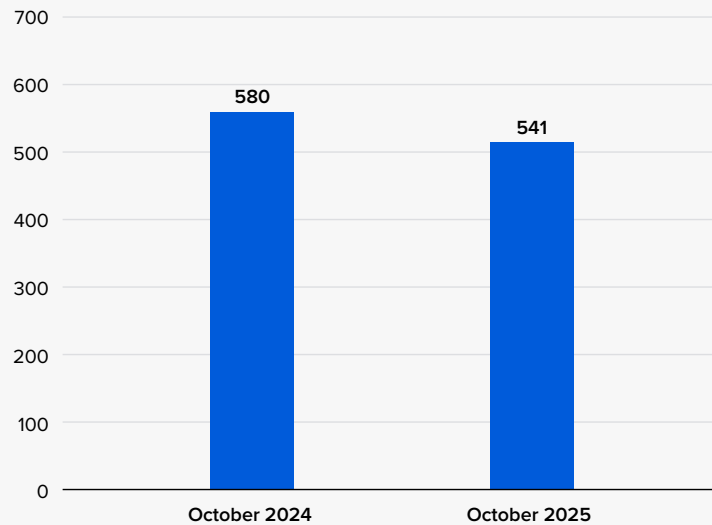


Source: Toptal, based on [Hacker News Hiring](#) data

The next chart demonstrates a downward year-over-year trend with a 6.7% decrease. The larger historical context here is that demand—as measured by job postings on Hacker News—is down significantly versus a few years ago. The number of job postings in Q3 2025, for example, represented a 57% decrease from the number of postings in Q3 2022.

Year-Over-Year Change in Global Technology Job Postings on Hacker News

-6.7% | 



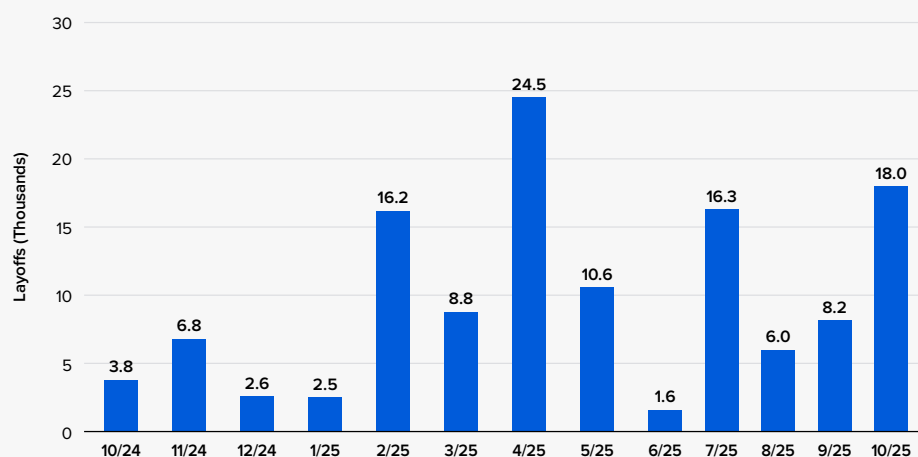
Source: Toptal, based on [Hacker News Hiring](#) data

Global Tech Layoffs Remain Elevated

Layoffs provide an important and early indicator of the health of a particular job market. Tech layoff trends are especially important to track since the technology sector generally adopts AI and other new technologies first, meaning what is happening in this sector may point to the future direction of other parts of the economy. The chart below shows one year of technology layoffs, from October 2024 through October 2025.

Global Tech Layoffs Increase Month Over Month and Year Over Year

Layoffs of Technology Professionals, October 2024-October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Layoffs.fyi](#) data

We use data from Layoffs.fyi, a real-time aggregator that covers all economic sectors on the employer side (finance, retail, healthcare, etc.) and is regularly cited by *The Wall Street Journal*, Bloomberg, and TechCrunch. According to this data, layoffs rose 120% month over month versus September, and 375% year over year versus October of 2024. These spikes were almost entirely driven by Amazon, which alone accounted for 78% of October layoffs with 14,000 people affected. The five companies most affected—Amazon, Applied Materials, [REDACTED]

While the technology layoffs this year heavily reflect the specific circumstances at Amazon, Intel, and Microsoft, these large and bellwether companies provide important data points on the possibility of a recession and the overall volatility in the technology sector amid rapid, AI-related changes. Technology layoffs are significantly elevated compared to five years ago. Excluding the Q2 2020 spike in layoffs prompted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the two-year period from Q1 of 2020 to Q1 of 2022 saw approximately 5,800 layoffs per quarter—just 22% of the total layoffs in Q3 of 2025.

As nearly all economic sectors employ technology professionals, other industries have been helping pick up the market slack amid restructuring and layoffs in the tech sector itself. But many of the people affected in the past year are also likely continuing their job searches, impacting the supply side of the talent market and compensation negotiations. TechCrunch offers more detail on [firms conducting layoffs](#), supplementing the Layoffs.fyi data with context on company circumstances and affected departments. Factors cited as possible contributors to elevated layoffs include increased implementation of AI, pressure from US economic uncertainty, and the hopes of capitalizing on the stock market's statistical tendency [to respond positively to layoffs](#) under certain conditions.

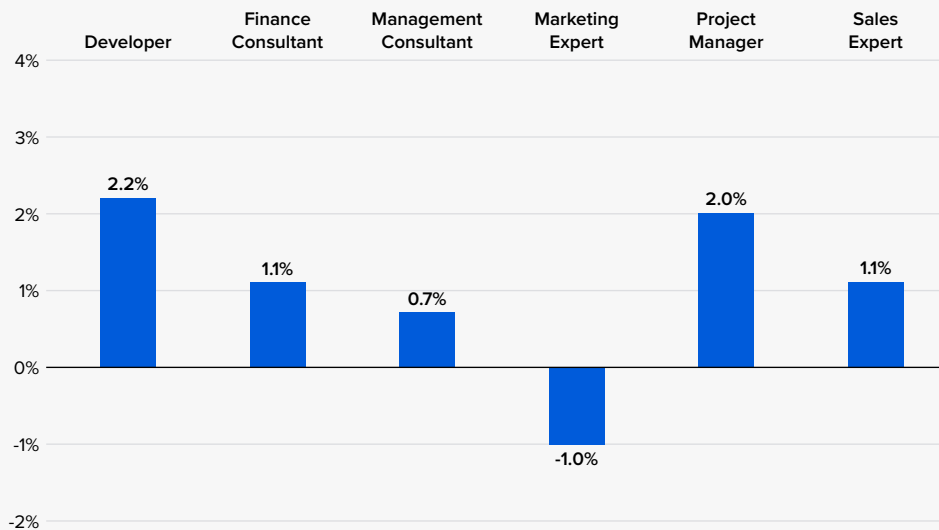
See [Recommended Further Reading](#) for more information about this year's technology layoffs.

Select US Demand and Hiring Trends

US Job Postings for Select Technology and Professional Services Areas Show Mixed Trends Month Over Month and Year Over Year

We now turn to Indeed for a picture of month-over-month trends for areas of expertise relevant to the Toptal Talent Network, with an understanding that such a large platform may be more susceptible to ghost job posts than a niche job board like Hacker News. (This possibility is not a reflection of Indeed as a platform, but rather of the companies posting the jobs.) This Indeed data differs from the data included in the Toptal Market Strength Scores in a few ways. It includes all experience levels (including entry-level roles) as well as all work models (including in-office work). Additionally, Indeed's job categories are more broadly defined than the way we define areas of expertise at Toptal (i.e., "developers" may include data scientists, information security engineers, and so on).

Changes in US Job Postings for Positions Aligned With Toptal Areas of Expertise
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025

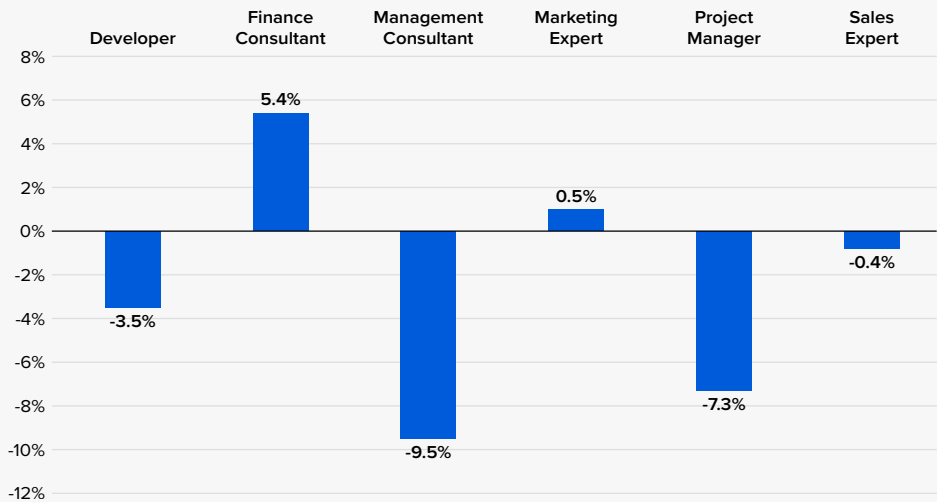


Source: Toptal, based on [Indeed Hiring Lab](#) data

The results show mixed trends with most areas showing slight increases, ranging from a 0.7% increase for management consultants to a 2.2% increase for developers. Marketing experts bucked this trend with a slight 1% decrease.

The next graph shows that the trends in job postings on Indeed are mixed year over year, with management consulting down 9.5% and finance consulting up 5.4%.

Changes in US Job Postings for Positions Aligned With Toptal Areas of Expertise
Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



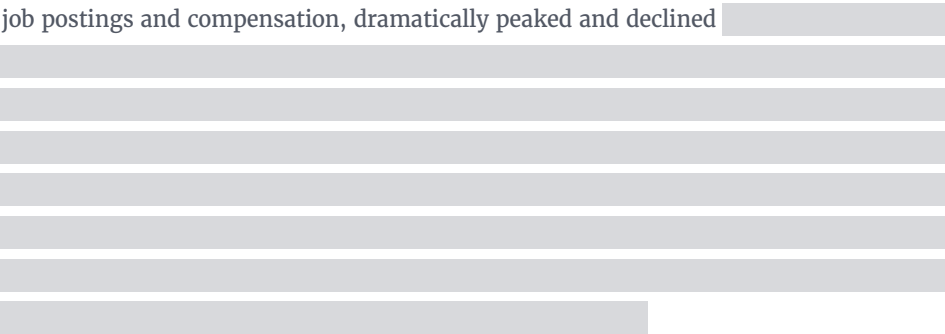
Source: Toptal, based on [Indeed Hiring Lab](#) data

Remote and Hybrid Demand and Hiring Trends

US Demand for Toptal-relevant Positions Remains Up Year Over Year

We now turn to the data most directly applicable and comparable to the Toptal Talent Network. The data in this section applies to **remote and hybrid positions for technology and professional services personnel with five or more years of experience.**

First, it's important to remember the recent history of market demand to interpret the relative significance of shorter-term versus longer-term statistics here and throughout this report. As the following graph illustrates, demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, dramatically peaked and declined



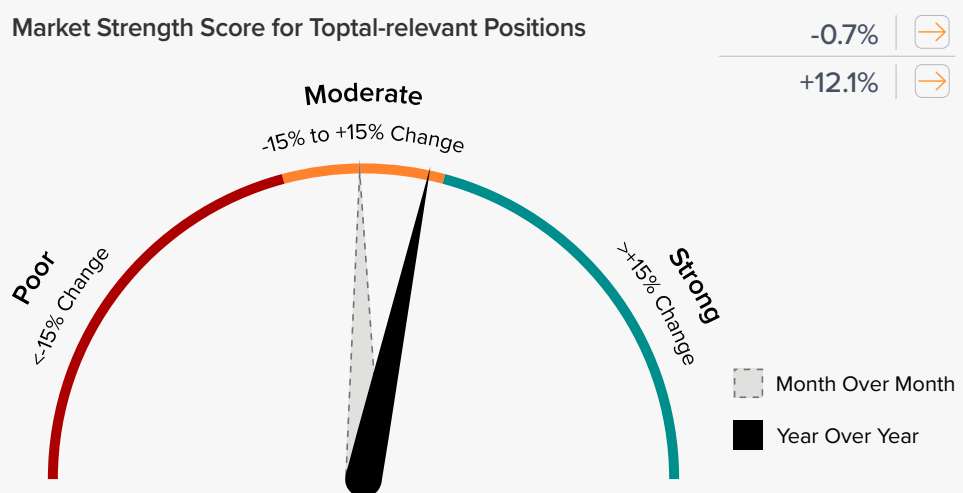
Aggregate Demand for Toptal-relevant Positions, Q3 2021-Q3 2025



Overall Toptal Market Strength Score

The Toptal Market Strength Score applies to remote and hybrid technology and professional services personnel with five or more years of experience. But unlike the data in the chart on the previous page, these scores also take actual hiring activity into account. As discussed in the [Summary](#) section, Toptal's Market Strength Scores equally weight trends in hiring (as measured by average monthly hires reported by Lightcast) and trends in stated demand (unique job postings and median advertised compensation). **Because Toptal Market Strength Scores are specific to experienced remote and hybrid technology and professional services personnel, and to positions that require five or more years of experience, they differ from broader market data shared earlier in this report and represent more positive results.**

Market Strength Score for Toptal-relevant Positions



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Market strength score is a combined metric that includes the number of job listings, their compensation, and average monthly hires. It takes into account full-time, part-time, and hourly jobs.

The 0.7% month-over-month decrease in market strength reflects a 7.8% decrease in hiring versus September of 2025, and a 6.4% increase in demand as measured by job postings and compensation. This demand growth was driven by month-over-month increases in the quantity of job postings, with compensation remaining flat. Full-time roles changed the least, with a 9% increase in job postings and a 3% decrease in compensation. Hourly and part-time roles showed 99% and 29% increases in job postings, respectively, with 4% and 2% increases in compensation, respectively.

Keep in mind that in the general market, hourly and part-time roles represent a much smaller portion of new job postings relative to full-time roles, and hence tend to show more volatility. Also, as noted earlier, the inclusion of hiring activity causes the month-over-month Toptal Market Strength Score of -0.7% to differ slightly from the [Aggregate Demand for Toptal-relevant Positions, Q3 2021-Q3 2025](#) findings.

The 12.1% year-over-year rise in market strength reflects a 14.3% increase in hiring versus October of 2024, and a 10.0% increase in demand as measured by job postings and compensation. Hourly roles saw a 25% decrease in postings and a 14% decrease in offered compensation; part-time roles saw a 58% increase in postings and a 9% increase in compensation; and full-time roles saw a 13% increase in postings and a 3% decrease in compensation. These trends together indicate that the market remains considerably stronger than it was a year ago, despite the month-over-month flat results, with demand and hiring both up year over year. They also point to budget-conscious employers having more compensation bargaining power due to layoffs in the technology sector.

The second half of this report, [Demand Trends by Toptal Area of Expertise](#), breaks down these trends by area of expertise, time commitment, and trends in postings versus compensation.

Demand Trends by Toptal Talent Area of Expertise

We now turn to trends in demand for the areas of expertise most directly comparable with those in the Toptal Talent Network. Toptal's Market Strength Scores take job postings, offered compensation, and hiring into account and apply to remote or hybrid roles that require five or more years of experience.

As reported in the [Trends in the Global and US Job Market section](#), the overall strength of the market for these Toptal-relevant roles decreased by 0.7% month over month, for a score of Moderate. Demand grew 12.1% year over year, also for a score of Moderate.

In terms of specific areas of expertise, trends in job postings and pay varied widely, with large increases for product managers and marketing, for example, but decreases for design experts. Overall, our analysis suggests that demand is still adjusting and recovering from the market bottom in Q4 of 2023 (see [Aggregate Demand for Toptal-relevant Positions, Q3 2021-Q3 2025](#) for an illustration of this trend).

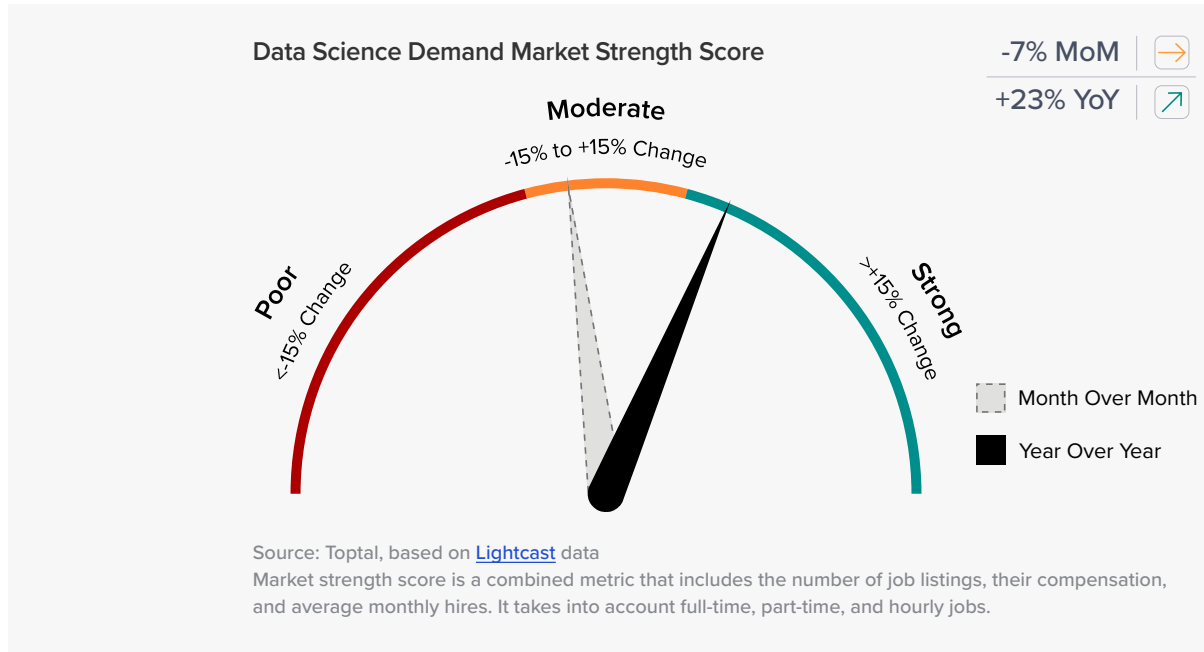
TRENDS BY AREA OF EXPERTISE	MARKET STRENGTH SCORE	
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Data Science Expert Trends	-7% 	+23% 
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Management Consultant Trends	-6% 	-13% 
Marketing Expert Trends	+4% 	+18% 
Product Manager Trends	+13% 	+21% 
Project Manager Trends	+5% 	-9% 
Sales Expert Trends	-1% 	+15% 

The market strength score includes job listings, compensation, and hiring for full-time, part-time, and hourly roles. Note: Scores for product manager roles are more volatile due to differences in the available data.

 Poor <-15% Change
  Moderate -15% to +15% Change
  Strong >+15% Change

Data Science Expert Trends

The graphic below shows demand and hiring for positions in data science in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.

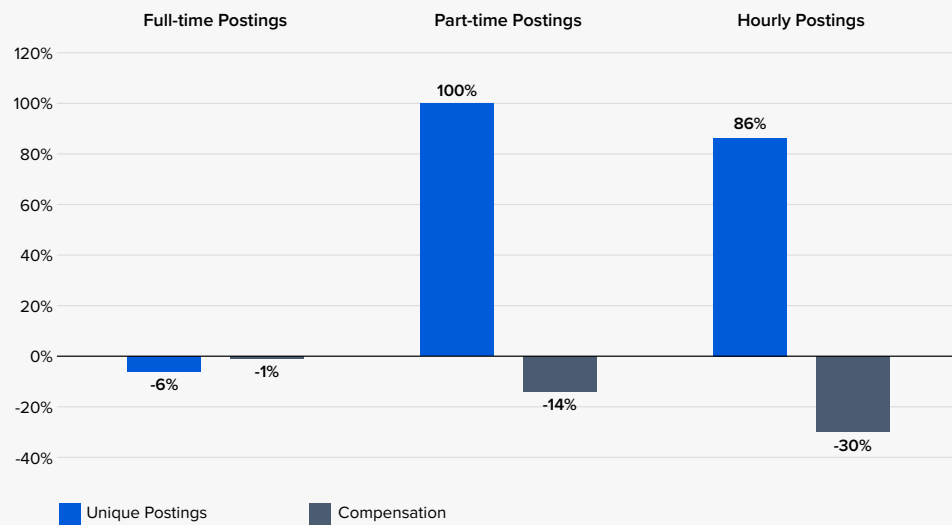


Market strength decreased 7% month over month and increased 23% year over year, for scores of Moderate and Strong. Stated demand and actual hiring moved in tandem for both timeframes, with both decreasing month over month and increasing year over year.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Data Science Demand Market Strength Score

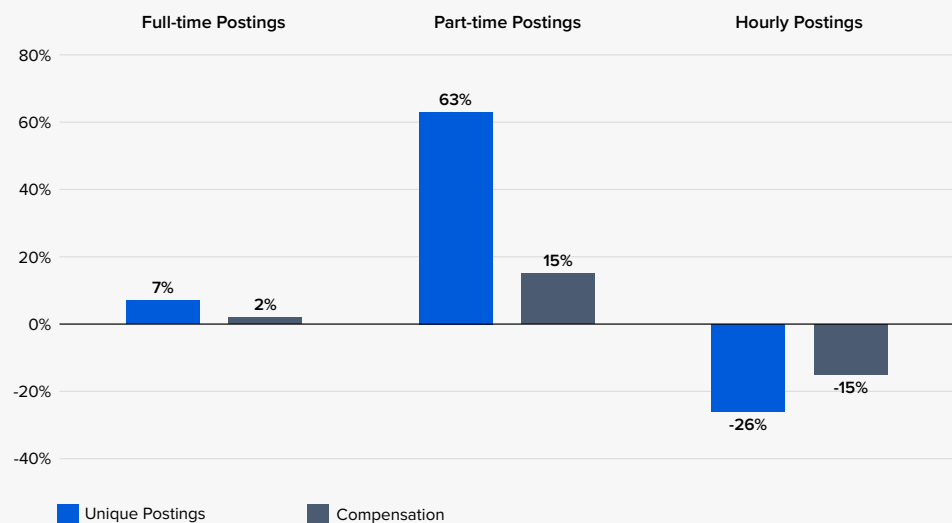
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Data Science Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

The breakdowns show considerable variation across time commitments and monthly versus annual trends. Job postings for full-time roles decreased 6% month over month and increased 7% year over year. Compensation edged down by 1% month over month but was up 2% year over year. Part-time job postings showed the most dramatic gains, increasing 100% month over month and 63% year over year. Compensation was more mixed, with a month-over-month decline of 14% and a

year-over-year increase of 15%. Hourly roles showed short-term gains with an 86% increase in job postings but a 30% decrease in compensation. Year over year, both postings and compensation were down, by 26% and 15%, respectively. The findings for part-time and hourly roles are based on more limited data points and should be taken more as general directional indicators of the market.



-8%

Month-over-month change in data science hires
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data



+38%

Year-over-year change in data science hires
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all data science positions combined, decreased 8% month over month but remained up 38% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) shows an important difference for full-time roles on a month-over-month basis, with



Brad DeFrank
Director of Delivery
and AI Strategy,
Toptal

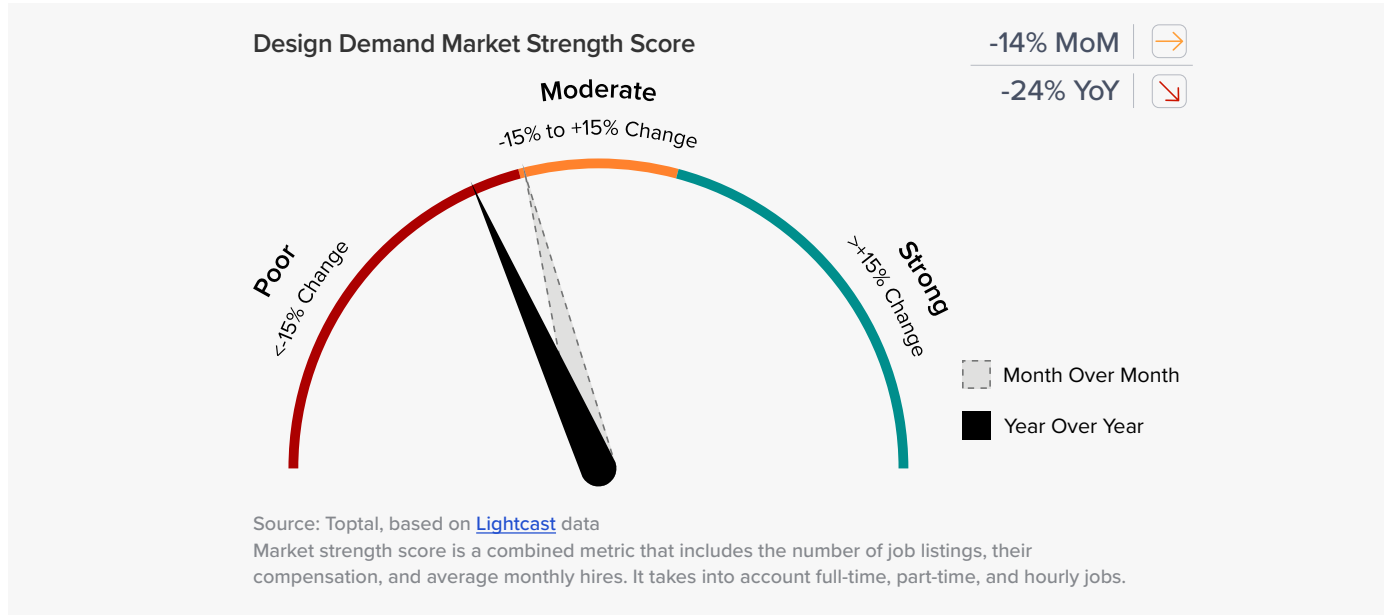
October 2025 Commentary

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October continued the strong but highly selective demand for data specialists as companies transitioned into the 'ROI Era' of AI, expecting tangible value from their data initiatives. This has intensified the focus on strategic hiring over broad expansion. Clients are increasingly investing in machine learning engineers and AI specialists who can deliver production-ready solutions, requiring skills in areas such as MLOps, LLMs, generative AI, and AI governance. Crucially, organizations are prioritizing talent who can combine these advanced AI skills with deep domain-specific expertise, ensuring complex data problems are translated directly into high-impact, compliant business features.

Designer Trends

The graphic below shows demand and hiring for positions in design in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.

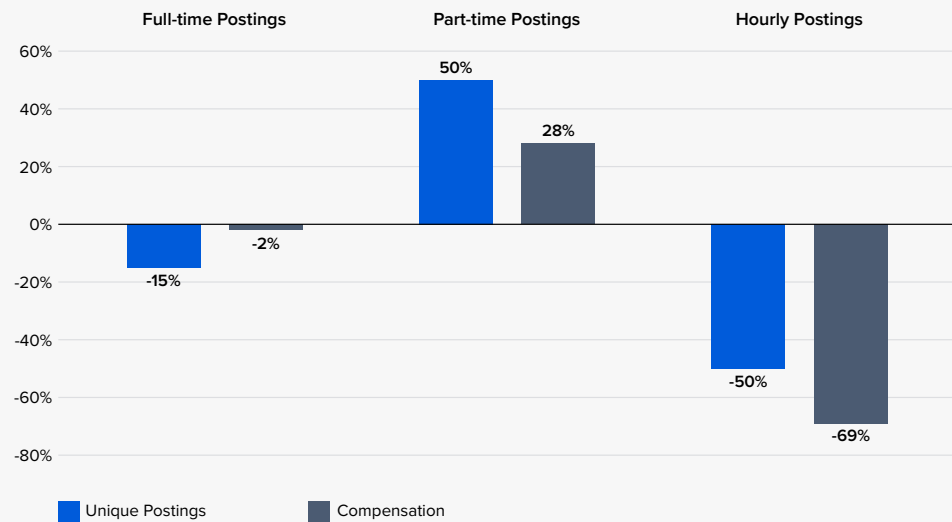


Market strength decreased 14% month over month and 24% year over year, for scores of Moderate and Poor, respectively. While stated demand and actual hiring moved generally in tandem month over month, hiring showed a modest 2% year-over-year increase despite the overall negative market score.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Design Demand Market Strength Score

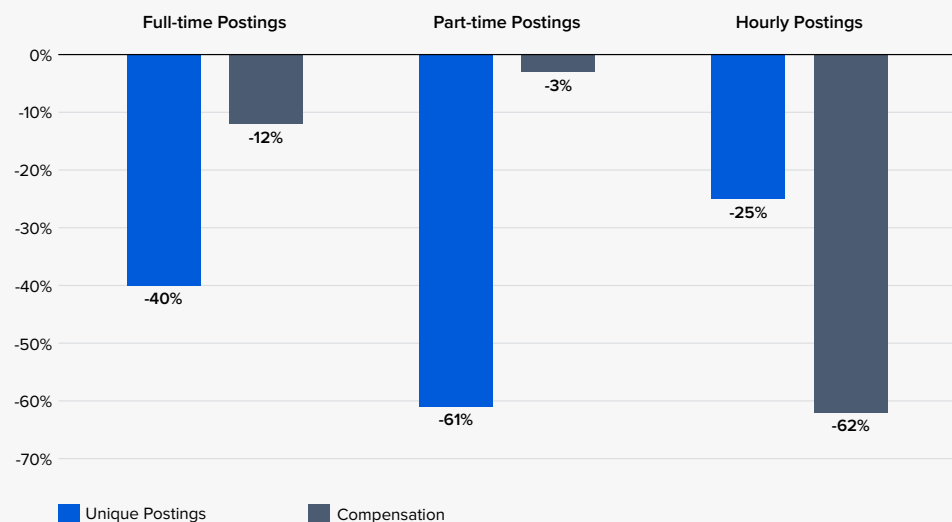
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Design Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

Job postings for full-time positions decreased 15% month over month and 40% year over year, with compensation also declining 2% month over month and 12% year over year. The part-time market dynamics were distinct from full-time, with higher growth in postings (50%) and compensation (28%) month over month, but declines in postings (61%) and compensation (3%) year over year. Hourly roles showed opposite trends to part-time on a month-over-month basis, with job postings and

compensation both down, by 50% and 69%, respectively. Year over year, however, the results resembled the negative trend in part-time trends, with postings down 25% and compensation down 62%. The findings for part-time and hourly roles are based on very limited data points and should be taken as general directional indicators of the market.



-10%

Month-over-month
change in
design hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



+2%

Year-over-year
change in
design hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all design positions combined, decreased 10% month over month but increased by 2% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) is more negative, with



Leonardo Silva
Design Matching
Team Lead, Toptal

October 2025 Commentary

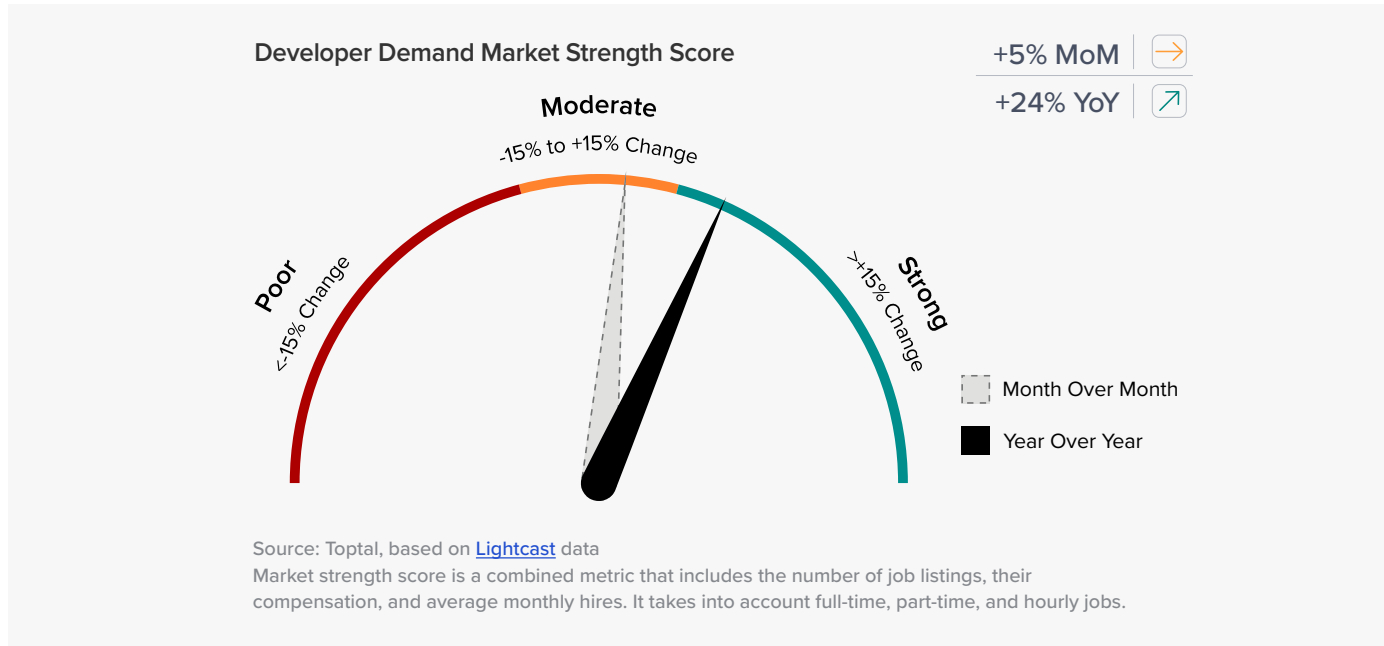


October hiring analysis made one thing clear: The demand for designers continued to evolve in fascinating ways. Despite the fluctuating dynamics of the general market, we observed a consistent demand for innovation and specialization. The shift toward more specialized roles, such as AI-driven design and UX/UI for emerging technologies, highlights the growing need for designers who can adapt to rapidly changing landscapes.

Furthermore, we are seeing a rise in project-based opportunities, suggesting that flexibility remains a key asset for professionals in this field. Designers who hone niche skills, stay abreast of technological advancements, and embrace diverse project types are best positioned to remain competitive and relevant in this vibrant market.

Developer Trends

The graphic below shows demand and hiring for developer positions in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, the median advertised compensation, and hiring.

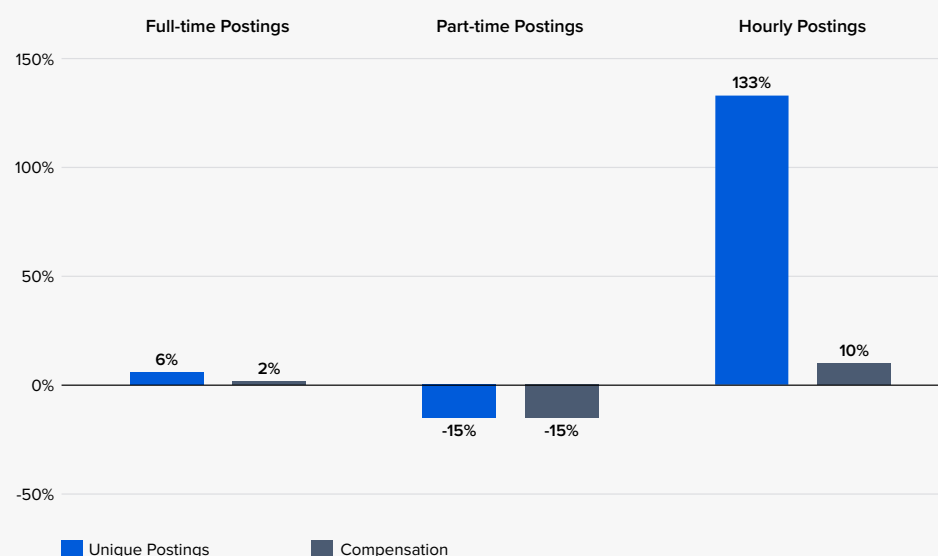


Market strength increased 5% month over month and 24% year over year, for scores of Moderate and Strong, respectively. Both scores benefited from an increase in actual hiring in addition to stated demand, with hiring showing particular momentum year over year.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Developer Demand Market Strength Score

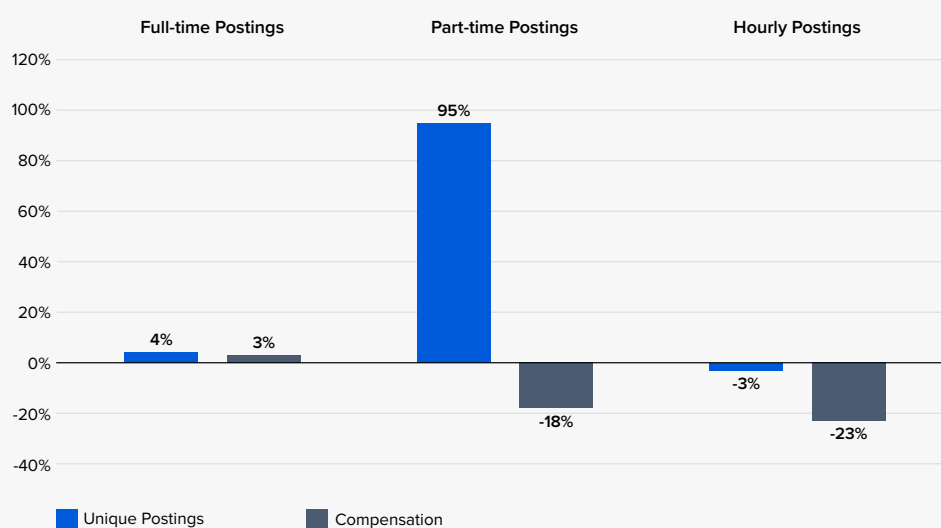
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Developer Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

Full-time roles were relatively flat month over month and year over year in both job postings and compensation. Part-time trends were mixed, with a decrease of 15% in both postings and compensation month over month, but an increase in year-over-year postings of 95%, while compensation fell 18%. Hourly trends were also mixed, with job postings surging 133% month over month but declining 3% year over year, and compensation increasing 10% month over month but decreasing 23% year over

year. The findings for part-time and hourly roles are based on limited data points and should be taken as general directional indicators of the market.



+2%

Month-over-month
change in
developer hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



+40%

Year-over-year
change in
developer hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all time commitments combined, increased 2% month over month and surged 40% year over year. This follows similar year-over-year trends in Q3 when hiring was up 29%. Hiring for development roles has been steadily recovering since the market bottom in Q4 2023, but softened a bit in 2025. The slowdown may have been driven in part by the global macro volatility in Q2 and a seasonal lull in Q3—but it also likely reflects ongoing market restructuring in the face of the ongoing adoption of AI.

The analysis above includes demand for roles with five or more years of experience. Demand for roles with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) shows certain important differences, with



Vrinda Dabke
VP, Global
Technology Services
Delivery, Toptal

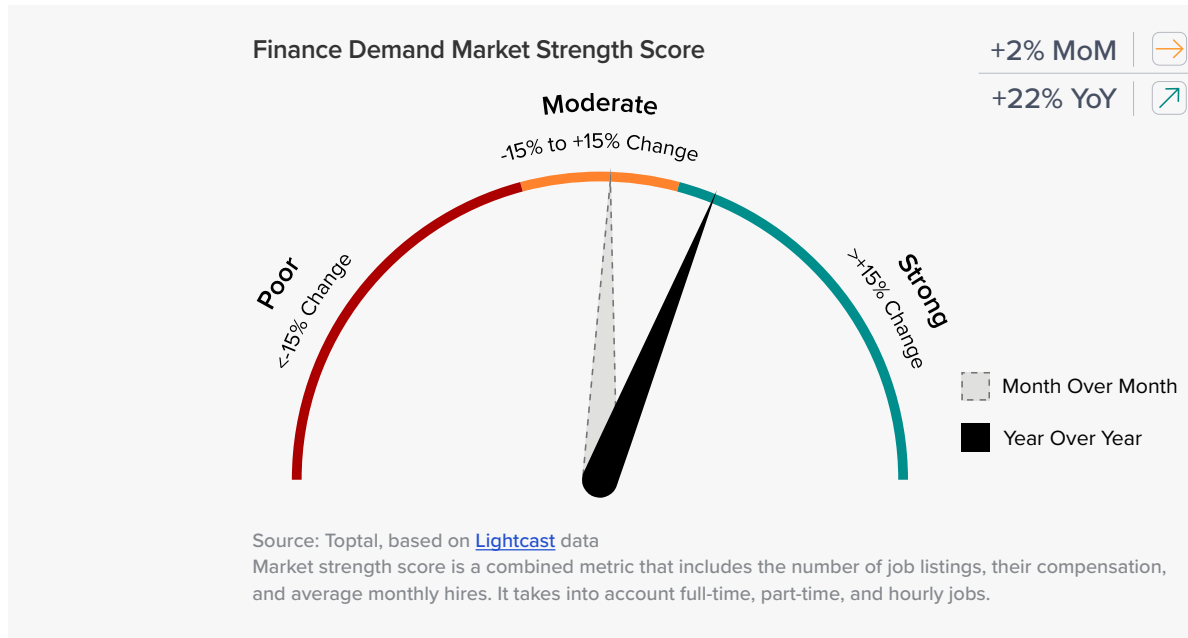
October 2025 Commentary

“

October revealed a sustained, selective demand for senior-level specialists in developer hiring, driven by the need for immediate, high-impact ROI. The market continued to favor strategy-based hiring, prioritizing candidates who can demonstrate immediate, transformative ROI through skills like generative AI integration, MLOps, and advanced cloud security. However, the traditional significant year-end hiring slowdown is likely to persist into late November and December due to year-end budget freezes.

Finance Consultant Trends

The graphic below shows demand and hiring for positions in finance in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.

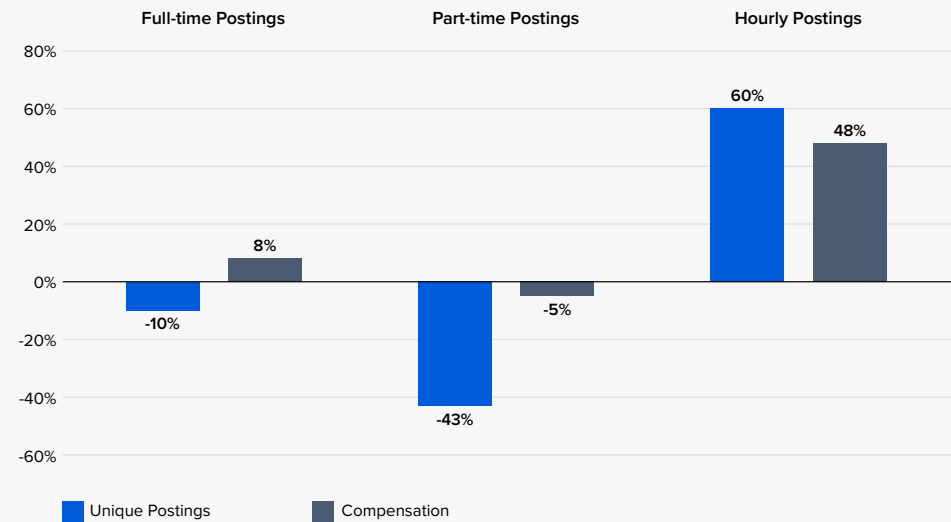


Market strength increased 2% month over month and 22% year over year, for scores of Moderate and Strong, respectively. Both scores benefited from increases in actual hiring. Stated demand, as measured by job postings, declined slightly month over month but remained significantly up year over year.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Finance Demand Market Strength Score

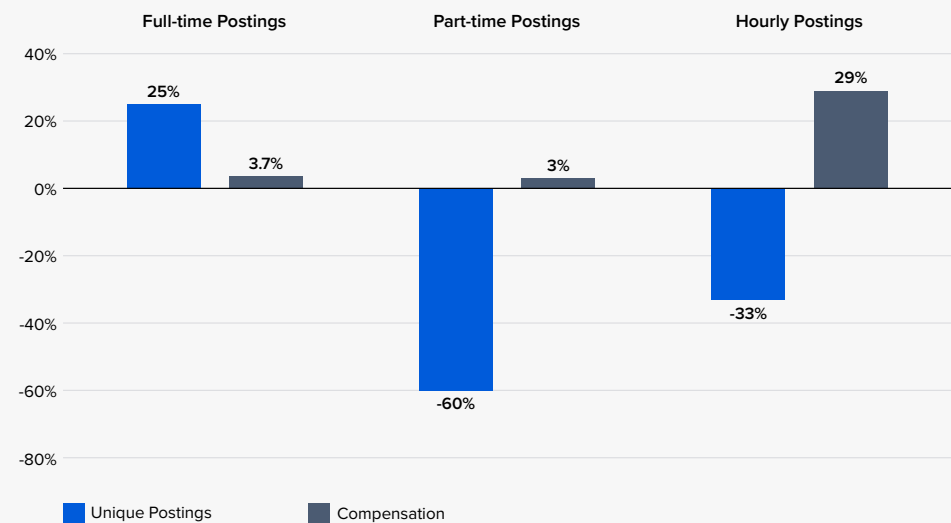
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Finance Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

Full-time job postings fell 10% month over month, but rose 25% year over year, while compensation increased by single digits in both time periods. Part-time roles showed double-digit declines in postings, falling 43% month over month and 60% year over year. Part-time compensation was relatively flat, however, falling 5% month over month, and increasing 3% year over year. Hourly roles showed the strongest month-over-month performance with a 60% increase in postings and a 48% increase in

compensation. Year-over-year hourly postings decreased 33%, while compensation rose 29%. The findings for part-time and hourly roles are based on very limited data points and should be taken only as general directional indicators of the market.

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all finance positions combined, increased 8% month over month and 15% year over year.

The analysis of data above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) showed



+8%

Month-over-month
change in
finance hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



+15%

Year-over-year
change in
finance hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



Michael Valocchi
Senior Client
Solutions Advisor,
Toptal

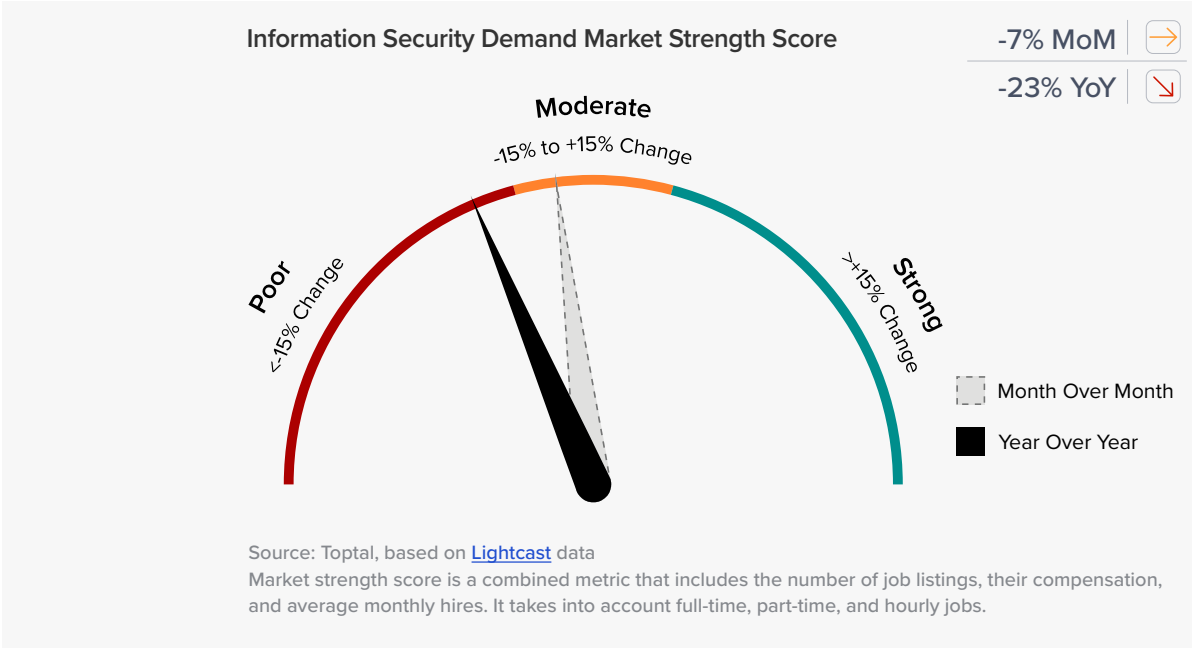
October 2025 Commentary

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Demand for finance and accounting experts remained steady in October. As organizations prepared for their 2026 investments, understanding the underlying financial impact of key decisions remained a top priority. We also observed increased demand surrounding fundraising and M&A as investment and acquisition activity rose, driven by decreasing interest rates.

Information Security Expert Trends

The graphic below shows demand and hiring for positions in information security in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.

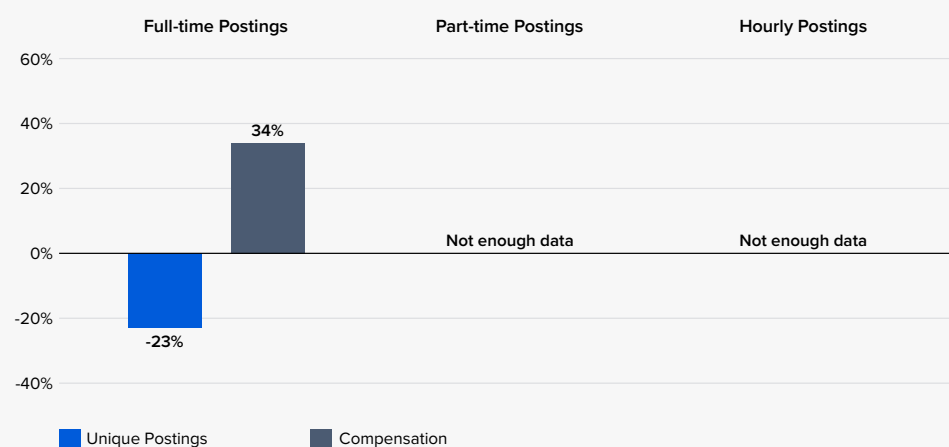


The results show market strength decreasing 7% month over month and 23% year over year, for scores of Moderate and Poor, respectively. The month-over-month score reflects a decline in both stated demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, and actual hiring. Despite being rated as Poor, the year-over-year score benefited slightly from a 16% year-over-year increase in hiring.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Information Security Demand Market Strength Score

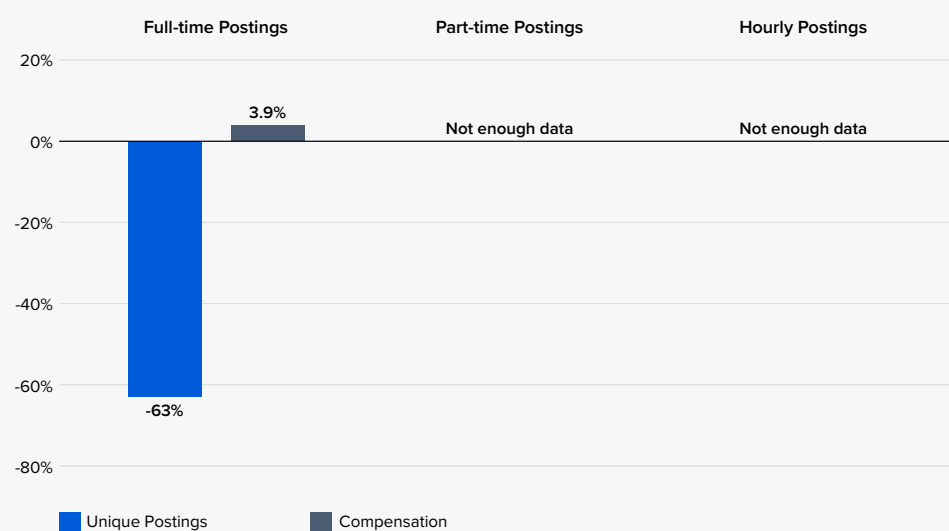
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

A Closer Look: Components of the Information Security Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Full-time job postings declined 23% month over month and 63% year over year. Compensation trends were more positive both month over month and year over year, with increases of 34% and 3.9%, respectively. There was insufficient data available for reliable trends in part-time and hourly positions.



-12%

Month-over-month
change in information
security hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



+16%

Year-over-year
change in information
security hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



Zohra Ibrahim
Practice Director,
Cyber and
Information
Security Services,
Toptal

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all information security positions combined, decreased 12% month over month but increased 16% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) shows



October 2025 Commentary

“

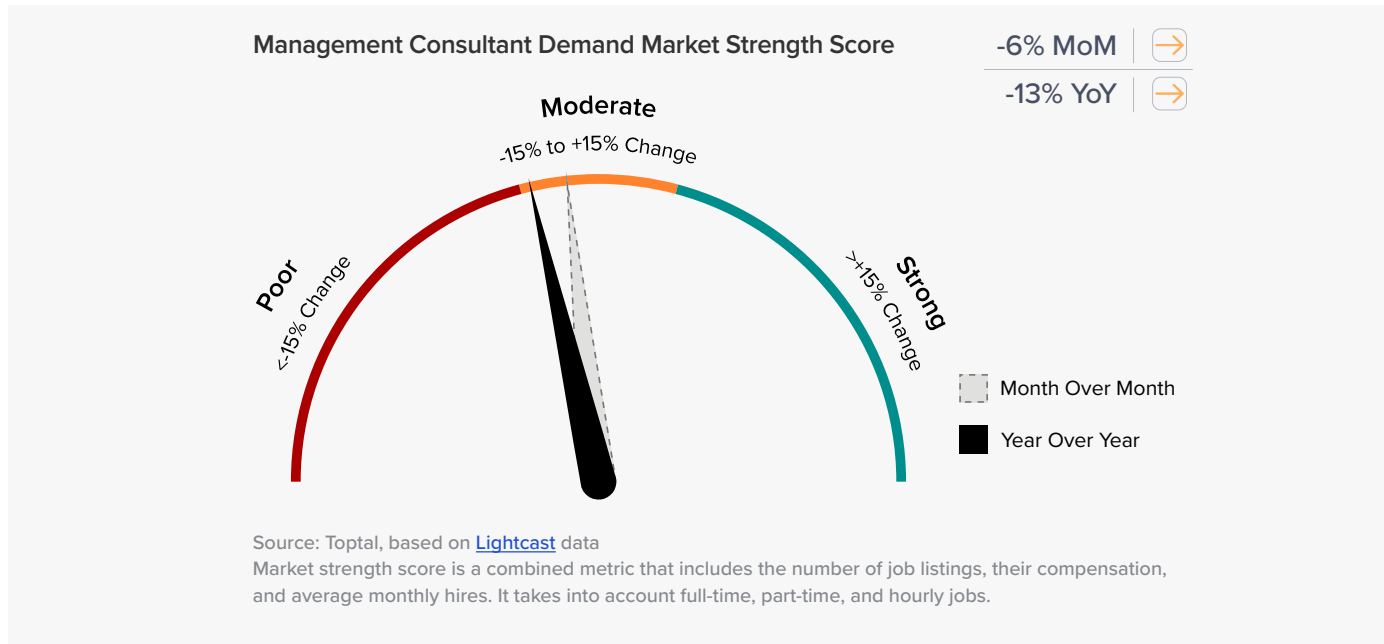
In October, the momentum from Q3 shifted the focus from improving security posture to achieving holistic cyber resilience, driven by two major market inflection points: AI governance and the initial stages of the post-quantum shift. While the demand for general defense mechanisms remained high, we saw an urgent, emerging need for professionals who could help define and implement an AI security posture management layer to mitigate new risks, such as model poisoning and LLM jailbreaking. This positions AI risk assessment and AI/ML security architecture as critical governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) components.

Simultaneously, the market underwent strategic consolidation, increasing the need for consulting services related to post-M&A security integration and platform migration. This further amplified the urgency surrounding supply chain security and rigorous third-party vendor assessments that extend zero-trust principles to partner ecosystems. In highly regulated sectors, the anticipated impact of quantum computing drove immediate demand for specialists in post-quantum cryptography (PQC) readiness, specifically for cryptographic inventory mapping and developing PQC migration roadmaps.

Across the board, GRC remained a core driver of information security demand, with a heightened premium placed on fractional CISOs and strategic consultants who could translate complex technical risk into executive-level, business-enablement strategies. This underscores the fact that while data security, encryption, and cloud security are essential, the industry now places the highest value on consultants who possess strong analytical thinking and business acumen.

Management Consultant Trends

The graphic below shows demand and hiring for positions in management consulting in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, the median advertised compensation, and hiring. (This section covers management consulting strategy roles; see [Finance Consultant Trends](#) for information specific to finance experts.)

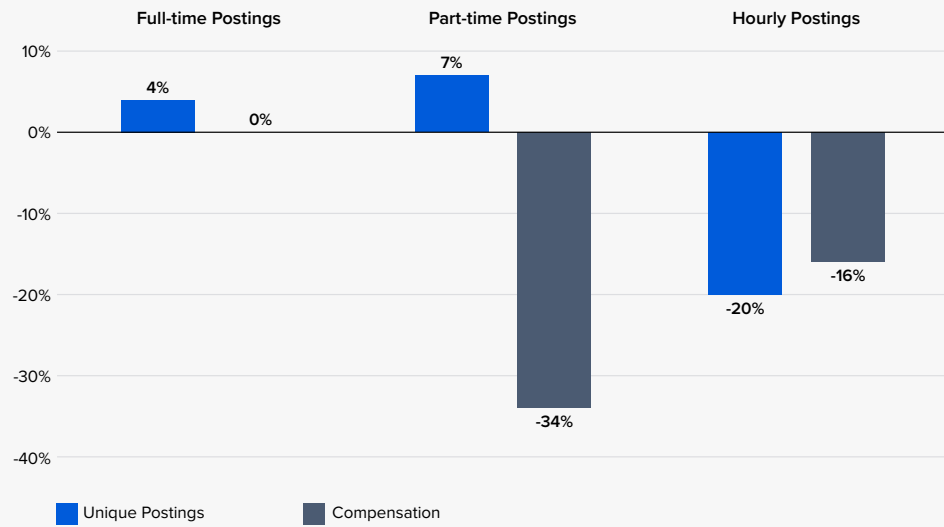


Market strength decreased 6% month over month and 13% year over year, for scores of Moderate. Stated demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, slightly increased month over month, despite the negative overall market score. Both hiring and stated demand decreased year over year.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Management Consultant Demand Market Strength Score

Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025

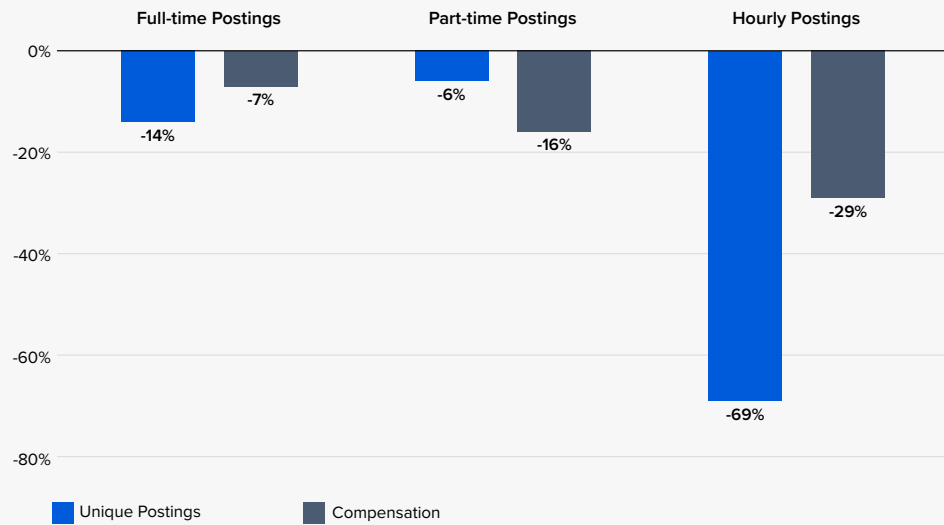


Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Note: Part-time role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Management Consultant Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Note: Part-time role results are based on limited data.

Full-time job postings increased 4% month over month and decreased 14% year over year, while compensation was flat month over month and fell 7% year over year. Part-time job postings increased by 7% month over month but were down by virtually the same magnitude year over year. Part-time compensation saw more negative trends, falling 34% month over month and 16% year over year. Hourly postings fell 20% month

over month and 69% year over year, and compensation was also negative, dropping 16% month over month and 29% year over year. The findings for part-time and hourly roles are based on very limited data points and should be taken only as general directional indicators of the market.



-15%

Month-over-month change in management consultant hires
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all management consulting positions combined, decreased 15% month over month and 7% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) shows



-7%

Year-over-year change in management consultant hires
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data



Michael Valocchi
Senior Client
Solutions Advisor,
Toptal

October 2025 Commentary

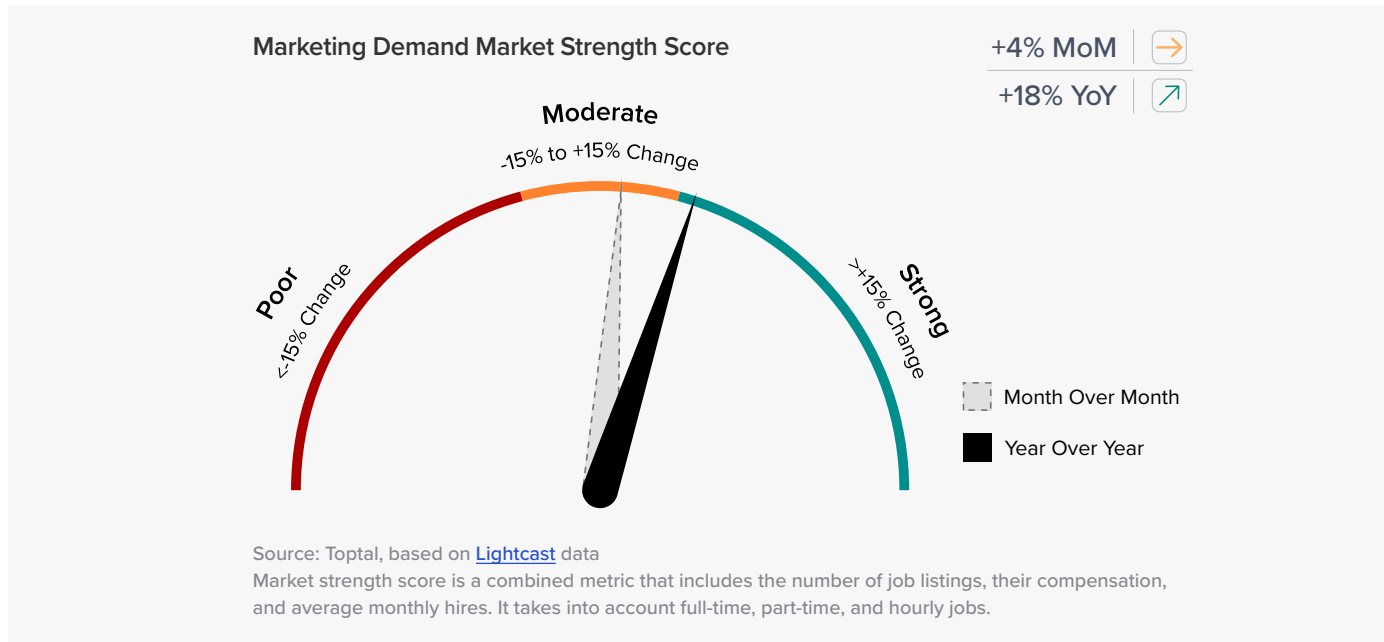
“

Demand for strategy, operations, and people consulting remained steady in October. AI has become a top priority for most leaders, and companies are looking to justify and scale their AI use cases. As a result, we observed a growing demand for business consultants to assist in creating business cases and envisioning future business models.

October also revealed an emerging demand for operations consultants and performance improvement consultants, as the continued market disruption drove an intense need to optimize costs. We also began to see the impact of new trade policies, leading to a demand for business transformation leaders. Finally, we saw an increased demand for people and change management experts as new challenges arose from AI and transformation efforts. We anticipate even greater demand for leadership development as companies continue to reinvent themselves.

Marketing Expert Trends

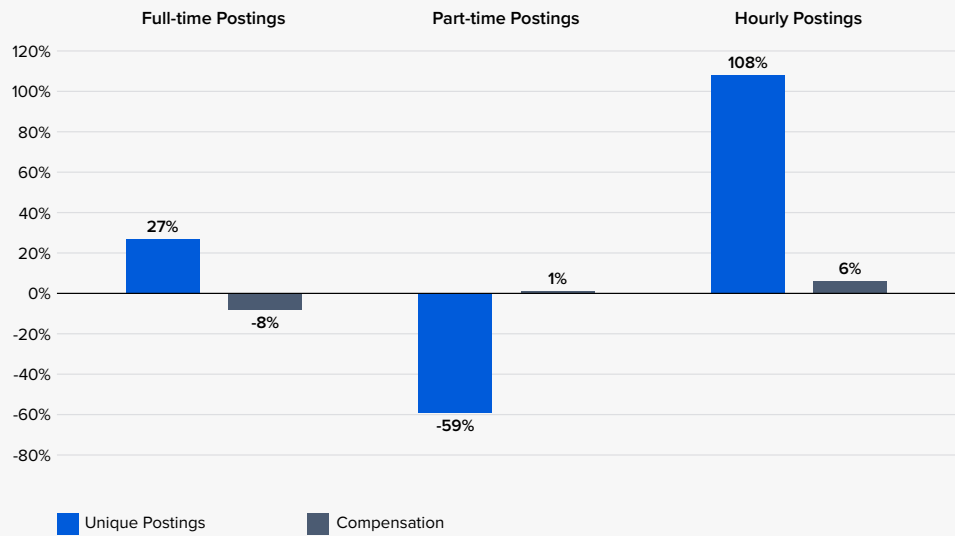
The graphic below shows demand and hiring for positions in marketing in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.



The market strength results show a 4% increase month over month and an 18% increase year over year, for scores of Moderate and Strong. The month-over-month score reflects an increase in stated demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, balanced by a 9% decrease in hiring. The year-over-year score benefited from increases in both stated demand and actual hiring.

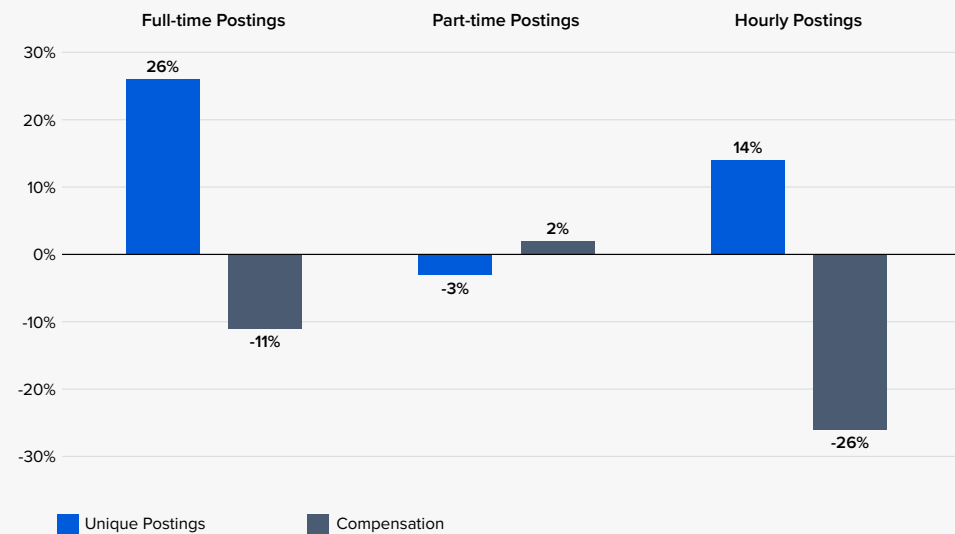
We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Marketing Demand Market Strength Score Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Marketing Demand Market Strength Score Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

Full-time job postings increased 27% month over month and 26% year over year, while compensation fell 8% month over month and 11% year over year. Part-time job postings saw the most dramatic drop month over month, decreasing 59%, but with the year-over-year decrease was a moderate 3%. Compensation remained mostly flat, with a 1% increase month over month and a 2% increase year over year.

Hourly positions saw a 108% increase, accompanied by a modest 6% increase in compensation, while year-over-year job postings were up 14% and compensation fell 26%. Due to the limited data points available for part-time and hourly positions, these findings should be taken only as general directional indicators of the market.



-9%

Month-over-month
change in
marketing hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



+24%

Year-over-year
change in
marketing hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all marketing positions combined, decreased 9% month over month but remained up 24% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for roles with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) shows



Chris Krohn
GM, Toptal's
Marketing Agency

October 2025 Commentary

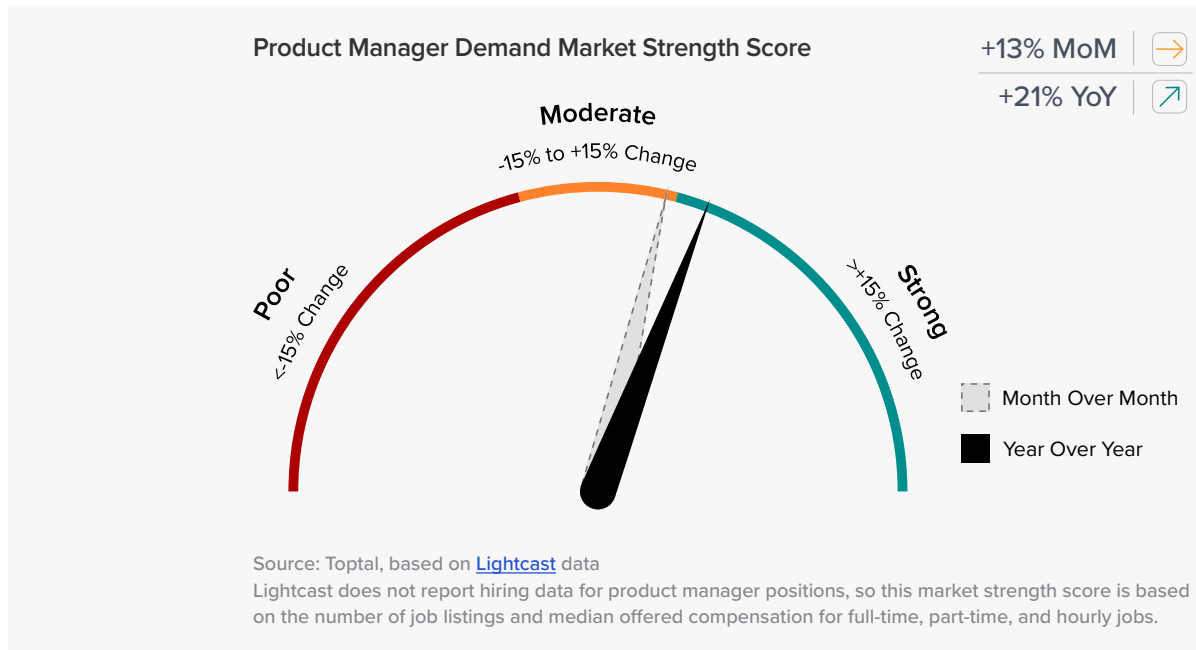
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Building on healthy demand for marketing services in Q3, we saw continued growth in demand in October, mostly driven by the need for marketing support from enterprise companies. We saw the most demand from the media and technology, consumer products, and financial services sectors.

We saw demand for growth marketing projects decline slightly in October, whereas interest in marketing operations, creative, and content marketing increased. This continued a trend that began in May of this year, when interest in growth marketing projects peaked and we noted that companies had redirected their marketing budgets toward cost-cutting measures and operational efficiency.

Product Manager Trends

The graphic below shows demand for positions in product management in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings and the median advertised compensation. Lightcast does not report hiring activity for product manager positions.

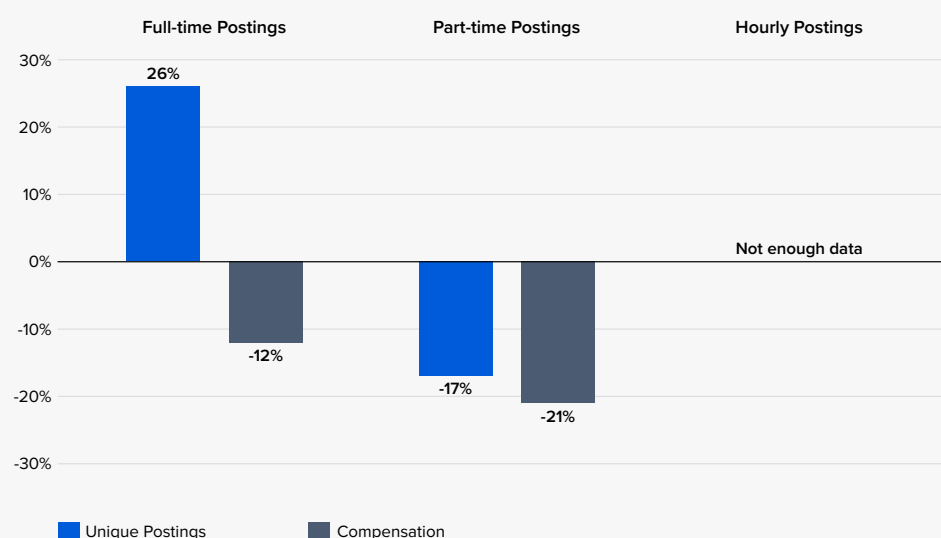


Market strength increased 13% month over month and 21% year over year, for scores of Moderate and Strong, respectively. Both scores were driven by strong gains in full-time job postings, though this was partly offset by decreases in offered compensation. It's important to note that while stated demand, as measured by job postings and offered compensation, provides an important market signal, it can also overstate the true demand due to ghost job postings, as discussed in the [Summary](#) section.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis.

A Closer Look: Components of the Product Manager Demand Market Strength Score

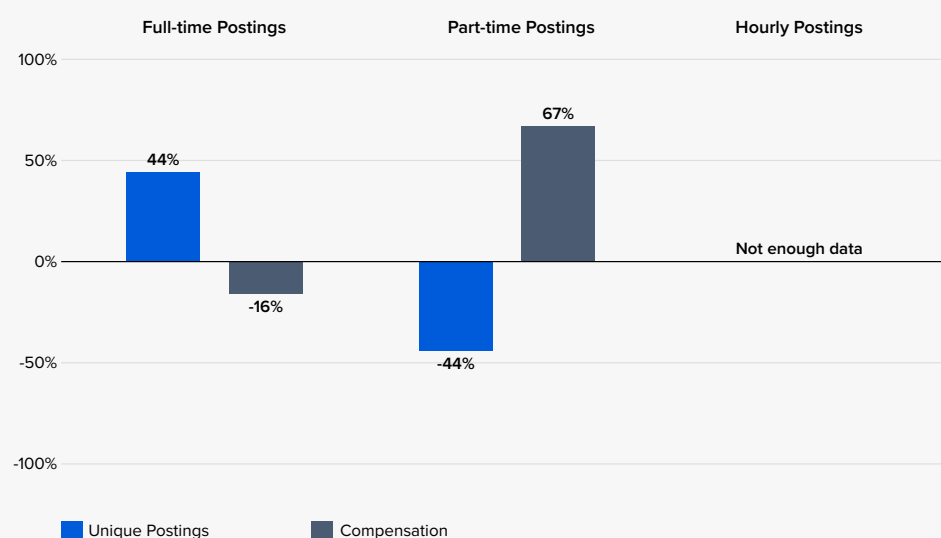
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Product Manager Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time role results are based on limited data.

Full-time postings increased 26% month over month and 44% year over year, while compensation dropped 12% month over month and 16% year over year. Part-time postings fell over both periods, with a 17% decrease month over month and a drop of 44% year over year. Part-time compensation fell 21% month over month but was up 67% year over year. The findings for part-time roles are based on very limited data points and should be taken only as general directional indicators of the market. There was insufficient data available for reliable trends in hourly positions.



-8%

Average month-over-month change in hiring for all Toptal areas of expertise
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data



+14%

Average year-over-year change in hiring for all Toptal areas of expertise
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Note: Lightcast does not report hiring data for product manager roles. We've included these averages to provide context on the general hiring trend.



Érico Sabino
Enterprise Matching
Team Lead, Toptal

While Lightcast does not gather hiring data for product managers, the data from other talent areas of expertise included in this report shows hiring activity decreasing by an average of 8% month over month and increasing by an average of 14% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) shows



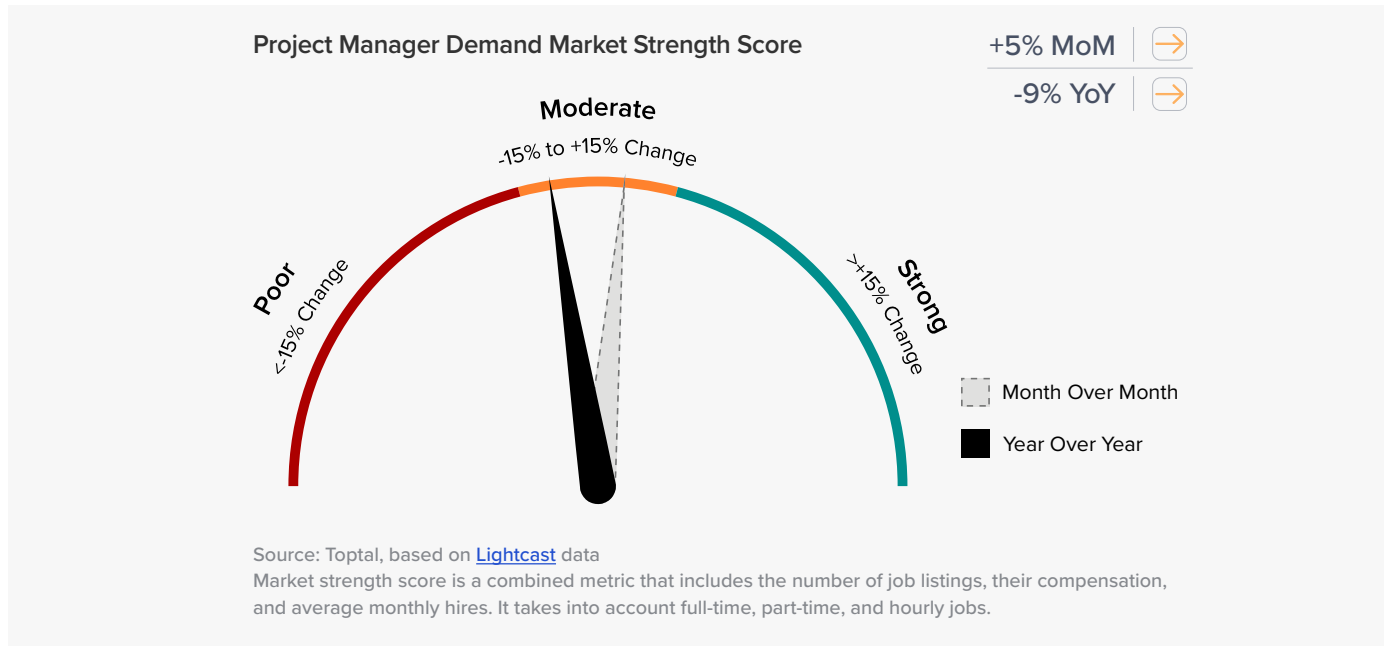
October 2025 Commentary



October continued to highlight a shift toward technical and program management roles, driven by a surge in demand for technical project managers across various sectors. This trend was particularly notable in AI-powered solutions and digital transformation initiatives, as seen in enterprises and SMBs focusing on real estate and blockchain applications. Additionally, the emphasis on Agile and business process management underscored the industry's commitment to efficiency and adaptability.

Project Manager Trends

The graphic below shows demand for positions in project management in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.

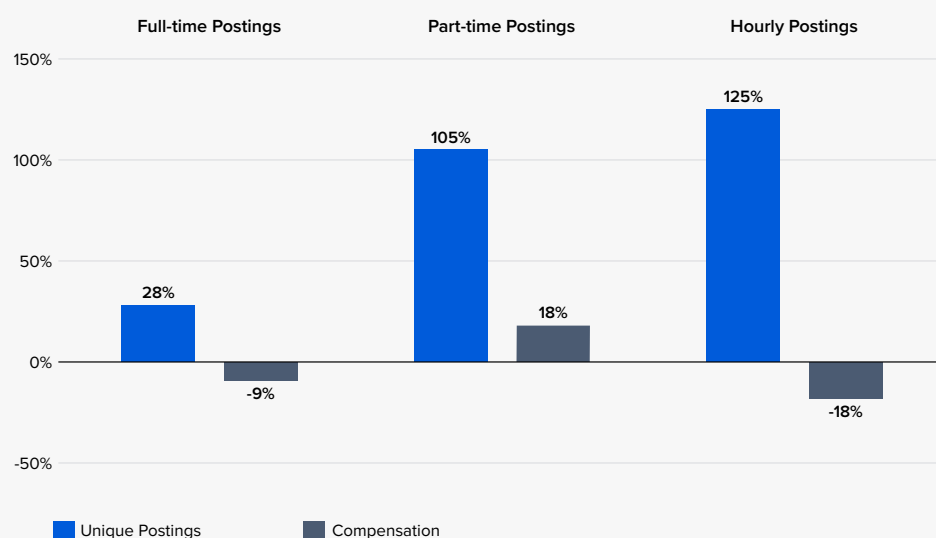


Market strength increased 5% month over month and decreased 9% year over year, for scores of Moderate. The month-over-month score benefited from a large increase in stated demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, but was partly offset by a decrease in actual hiring. The year-over-year score reflects a drop in stated demand and a modest increase in actual hiring.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined. When comparing the charts on the next page to the overall market strength scores, bear in mind that part-time and hourly roles represent a much smaller percentage of all positions (1% and 3%, respectively, as of Q3 of 2025) than they do for Toptal's client demand.

A Closer Look: Components of the Project Manager Demand Market Strength Score

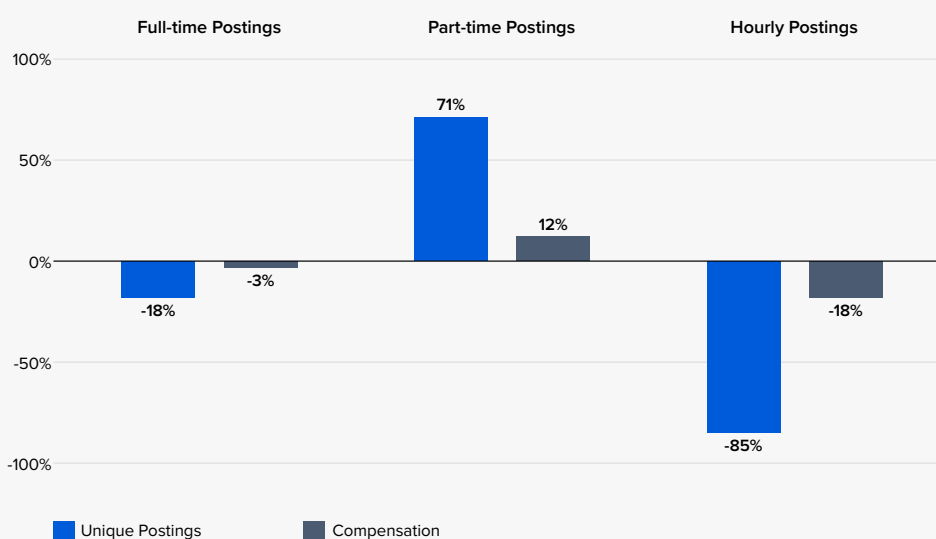
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Project Manager Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

Full-time job postings increased 28% month over month but decreased 18% year over year, while compensation decreased across both time periods, by 9% and 3%, respectively. Part-time positions showed more positive trends, with job postings increasing 105% month over month and 71% year over year, and compensation increasing 18% month over month and 12% year over year. Hourly job postings increased 125% month over month, but decreased 85% year over year, while

compensation was down 18% in both time periods. The findings for part-time and hourly roles are based on limited data points and should be taken only as general directional indicators of the market.

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all project management roles combined, fell 10% month over month but rose 6% year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data)



-10%

Month-over-month
change in project
manager hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



+6%

Year-over-year
change in project
manager hires
Source: Toptal, based
on [Lightcast](#) data



Sergio Castro
Product and Project
Management
Matching Team
Lead, Toptal

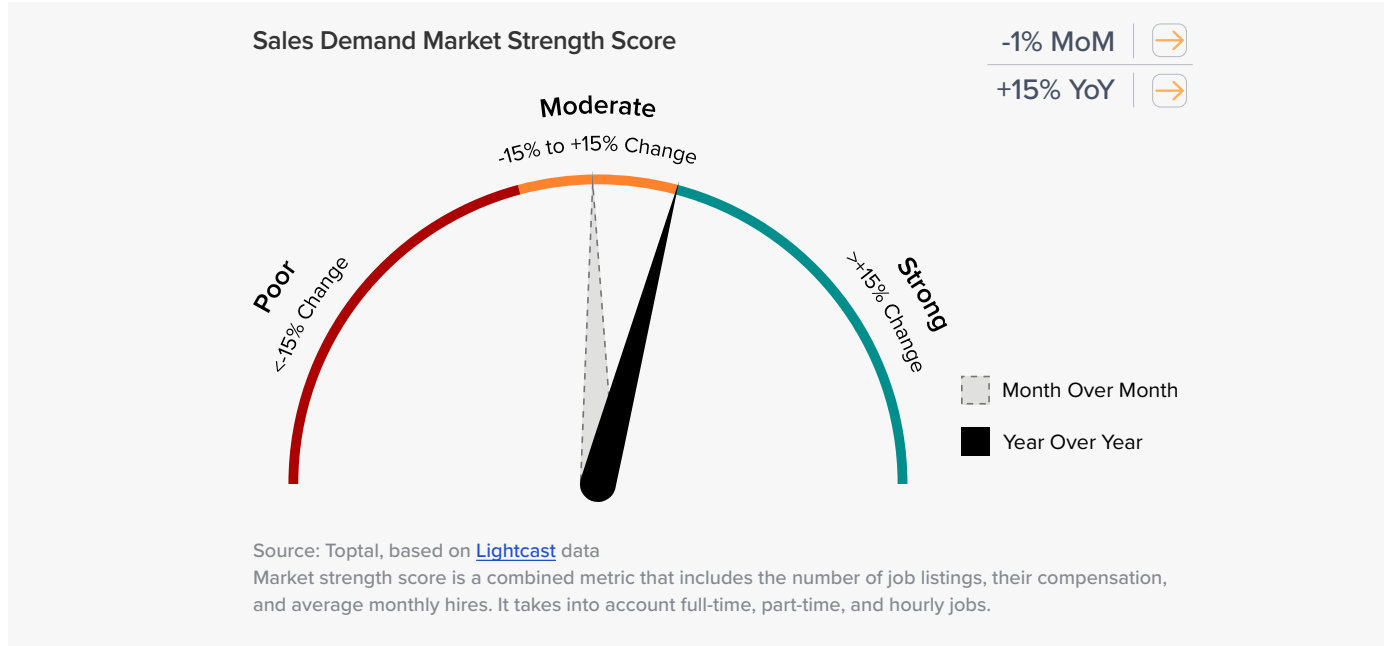
October 2025 Commentary

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In October, the demand for product managers with expertise in LLMs and artificial intelligence persisted, reflecting a significant industry pivot toward advanced AI-driven solutions. Roles focused on AI integration, such as AI product managers for internal workflow automation and AI-driven personal assistant applications, are becoming increasingly prevalent. Furthermore, the focus on minimum viable products and product roadmaps for AI solutions underscores a strategic trend toward rapid innovation and market responsiveness. This evolving landscape underscores the need for professionals to enhance their capabilities in AI and Agile product development to remain competitive and meet the dynamic market needs.

Sales Expert Trends

The graphic below shows demand for sales positions in October of 2025 versus September of 2025 and October of 2024. We measured demand by looking at the month-over-month and year-over-year changes in the number of unique postings, median advertised compensation, and hiring.

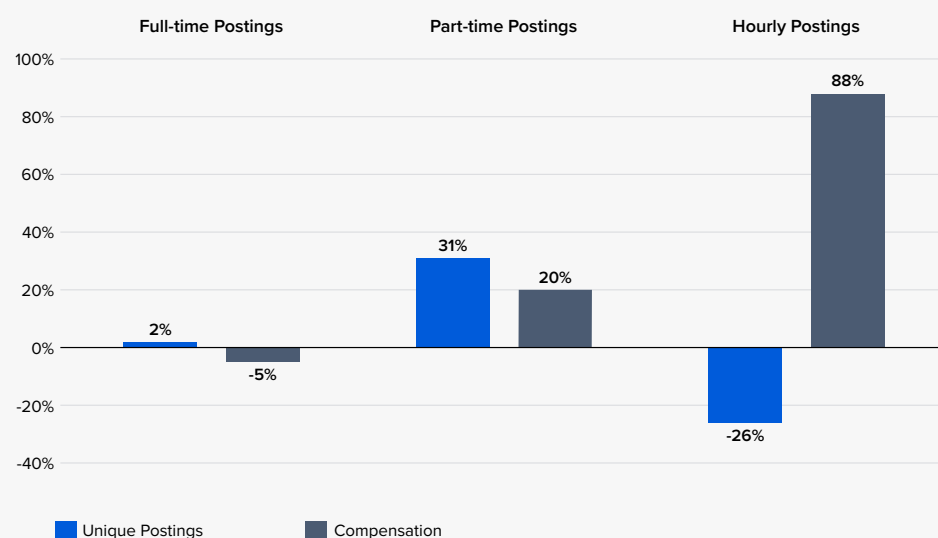


Market strength decreased 1% month over month for a score of Moderate. Year-over-year market strength rose 15%, also for a score of Moderate. The year-over-year score reflects a large increase in stated demand, as measured by job postings and compensation, and a modest increase in actual hiring.

We now break down these trends in terms of changes in positions posted and compensation offered, on both a month-over-month and year-over-year basis. After that, we discuss the trend in hiring, which Lightcast reports for all time commitments combined.

A Closer Look: Components of the Sales Demand Market Strength Score

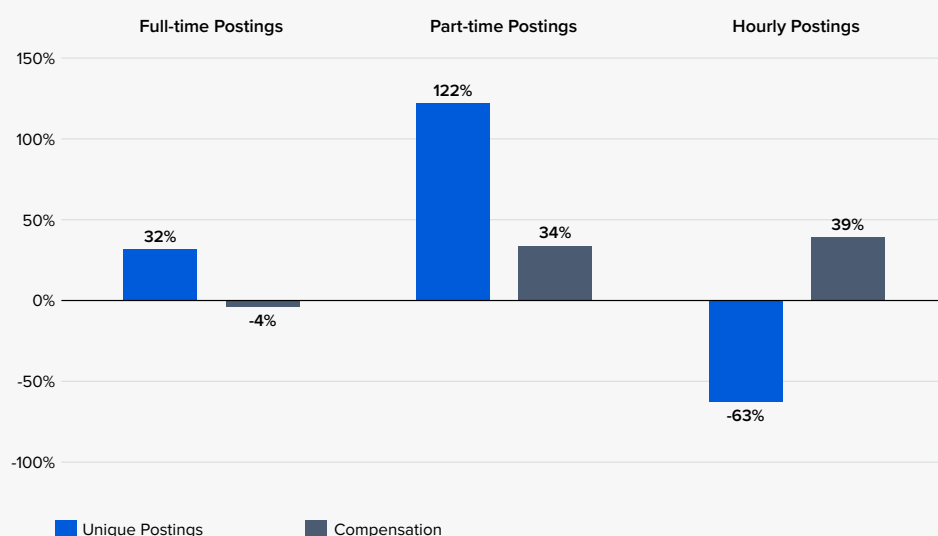
Month-Over-Month Trends, September 2025 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

A Closer Look: Components of the Sales Demand Market Strength Score

Year-Over-Year Trends, October 2024 vs. October 2025



Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data
 Note: Part-time and hourly role results are based on limited data.

Job postings for full-time roles increased 2% month over month and 32% year over year; compensation fell 5% month over month and 4% year over year. Part-time postings increased by 31% month over month and increased 122% year over year, while pay increased 20% month over month and 34% year over year. Hourly job postings fell 26% month over month and 63% year over year, while hourly compensation surged 88% month over month and 39% year over year. The findings

for part-time and hourly roles are based on limited data points and should be taken only as general directional indicators of the market.



-2%

Month-over-month hiring data is not available for sales experts.



+2%

Year-over-year change in sales hires
Source: Toptal, based on [Lightcast](#) data

Hiring activity, which Lightcast only makes available for all time commitments combined, decreased 2% month over month, but increased by the same magnitude year over year.

The analysis above includes demand for positions with five or more years of experience. Demand for positions with 10 or more years of experience (a subset of the prior data) showed



Toby Dusina
Director, Sales
Development, Toptal

October Commentary

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October highlighted a maturing phase in the global sales environment. After several quarters of pursuing efficiency, many organizations are confronting the limitations of cost-cutting and automation. Deal cycles remained longer than expected, buyer scrutiny intensified, and leadership teams began refocusing on quality engagement and sustainable pipeline health. AI continued to reshape daily workflows, but its greatest impact came from how teams used it: to accelerate research, improve personalization, and free up time for more meaningful human interactions.

Sales development functions evolved in response. Some companies trimmed headcount to manage budgets, while others reinvested in upskilling and enablement to drive higher output per rep. Early data indicates that organizations maintaining steady sales development representative capacity were better able to weather pipeline volatility than those that downsized. Account executives (AEs) faced similar pressure. Expectations grew broader, with AEs responsible for earlier-stage engagement, ROI storytelling, and cross-functional alignment as buyers demanded clearer outcomes.

Across both roles, October underscored a larger truth: Revenue growth is becoming a system challenge, not a headcount challenge. Success now depends on how effectively data, tools, and people collaborate from the initial contact to the final sale. The companies performing best are the ones treating sales as a unified ecosystem, balancing efficiency with momentum and investing in the fundamentals that technology alone can't replace: clarity, consistency, and connection.

Key Takeaways

Significant findings from this report, covering data from October 2025, are summarized below.

Global Trends

- + **Job postings for all professions and all levels of experience were down month over month and year over year** in most large global economies.

Source: Toptal, based on Indeed Hiring Lab data

- + **Global technology job postings declined 6.7% year over year**, to 541 open roles.

Source: Toptal, based on Hacker News data

- + **Global technology layoffs increased 120% month over month**, after a quarter-over-quarter decline of 28% in Q3 2025. Tech layoffs have **increased 375% year over year**. These trends were almost entirely driven by Amazon's October workforce reduction of 14,000 people.

Source: Toptal, based on Layoffs.fyi data

Trends for Experienced Remote and Hybrid Technology and Professional Services Personnel

- + Demand (as measured by job postings, median offered compensation, and hiring) for remote or hybrid technology and professional services talent with five or more years of experience **increased by 12.1% year over year**, for a Toptal Market Strength Score of **Moderate**.

Source: Toptal, based on Lightcast data

- + Demand (as measured by job postings, median offered compensation, and hiring) for data science experts **increased 23% year over year**, for a score of **Strong**.

Source: Toptal, based on Lightcast data

- + Demand (as measured by job postings, median offered compensation, and hiring) for software developers, finance consultants, marketers, and product managers also scored **Strong**, with **year-over-year demand growth of 24%, 22%, 18%, and 21%, respectively**.

Source: Toptal, based on Lightcast data

- + Demand (as measured by job postings, median offered compensation, and hiring) for designers and information security experts was **Poor**, **declining 24% and 23% year over year, respectively**.

Source: Toptal, based on Lightcast data

Appendix

Data Sources

This report uses data from the following sources:

Source	Data Type
Hacker News Hiring	Job postings for technology professionals
Indeed Hiring Lab	Data drawn from the popular site for job postings for the US and other major economies
Layoffs.fyi	Layoff data for technology professionals
Lightcast	Unique job postings and offered compensation by talent profile, aggregated from approximately 50,000 job boards, company career sites, and job posting aggregators

Recommended Further Reading

The trends and potential drivers discussed in this report have received attention and analysis from myriad points of view. The articles and reports below were chosen not necessarily because we agree with every point they make, but rather for the overall quality of their research and representation of the issues.



Talent Market and Vertical Demand Data Analysis

This analysis uses data from Lightcast, which aggregates job postings from approximately 50,000 sources, including job boards, company career sites, and job posting aggregators, scraping 6 to 8 million unique postings from more than 90,000 employers per month.

Lightcast then follows defined processes to fit the data into a common taxonomy and to remove duplicate and expired postings. More information on Lightcast's data sources and methodology can be found on the Lightcast website.

We conducted the analysis for full-time, part-time, and hourly positions. To align the data sample with the Toptal Talent Network, the following parameters were applied to the queries for each talent profile:

- Postings by US companies with no restrictions on talent location
- Postings by staffing companies and employers or clients
- Postings for remote and/or hybrid positions
- Postings requiring at least five years of experience
- Internships excluded

When job postings offered a compensation range, we used the midpoint.

Lightcast's language on taxonomy and identifying duplicates:

Lightcast uses a 60-day rule to identify duplicates. "For example, if there is a job for a Marketing Specialist at Google posted for the first time on March 1st, Lightcast considers this as the 'original posting' then for the next 60 days Lightcast considers any advertisements found as duplicates. In theory, if Google posts the same ad every day for the entire year on different sources Lightcast will count it 6 times."

"Each job posting is further enriched with value-add processes including:

- Job title and company standardization.
- Skill extraction and tagging.
- SOC and NAICS code determination and assignment.
- Education and experience determination."

Taxonomy for Talent Areas of Expertise

Toptal Report Terminology	Lightcast Terminology
Data Science Experts	Data Scientists
Designers	Graphic Designers Web and Digital Interface Designers
Developers	Software Developers
Finance Consultants	Financial and Investment Analysts
Information Security Experts	Information Security Analysts
Management Consultants	Management Analysts Business Operations Specialists
Marketing Experts	Marketing Managers Market Research Analysts Marketing Specialists
Product Managers	Positions with "Product Manager" included in job title.
Project Managers	Project Management Specialists
Sales Experts	Sales Managers Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing Sales Engineers Sales and Related Workers, All Other



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