Manatal

Recruitment Trends Report

September 2026

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Table of contents

About Manatal 01

Executive Summary 02

U.S. Payroll Growth: Tech Cuts, Debt 03

Strong GDP Growth Meets U.K. Job Cuts 06

FOBO: Worker Anxiety Over Skill Obsolescence 09

Data Center Hiring Surge: Premium Pay vs. Shift Constraints 11

Sources 15

Acknowledgements 16

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About Manatal

Manatal AI recruitment software is a next-generation Applicant Tracking System (ATS) designed to simplify and accelerate the entire hiring process. Established with the vision of democratizing access to advanced recruiting technology, Manatal has transformed the recruiting industry by making enterprise-grade AI accessible to teams of all sizes.

At its core is a proprietary AI engine, trained on millions of data points, which delivers industry-leading accuracy in resume parsing, candidate analysis, and profile enrichment. This intelligence empowers recruiters to engage talent more effectively and ensures frictionless collaboration among hiring managers and agencies, from initial sourcing to final onboarding.

Today, Manatal continues to pioneer the market with cutting-edge AI innovations, including the first MCP server integrations with ChatGPT and other AI chatbots, an autonomous AI interviewer, and advanced recommendation algorithms.

Since its launch in 2019, the platform has been adopted by over 10,000 organizations across 140 countries.

LOVED BY 10,000+ TEAMS WORLDWIDE



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Executive Summary

As of September 2026, global hiring is being shaped by a widening gap between economic performance, workforce availability, and future skill needs. Employers face uneven hiring, AI talent shortages, skill obsolescence concerns, and rising demand for technical workers.

This month's Recruitment Trends report examines the workforce shifts influencing hiring decisions and the strategies leaders can use to build more resilient talent pipelines in a rapidly changing employment environment.

The Core Shifts

1. **U.S. Employment Shift**
   Surging service and public sector hiring masks tech contractions, falling real wages, and mounting debt pressures.

2. **U.K. Labor Mismatch**
   Workforce demand diverges from economic growth: retail and hospitality lose jobs while healthcare hiring expands.

3. **AI and Obsolescence**
   Rapid skill obsolescence from AI adoption forces workers and employers to prioritize continuous training.

4. **Data Center Growth**
   Expanding infrastructure drives fierce competition for skilled trade, engineering, and operations talent.

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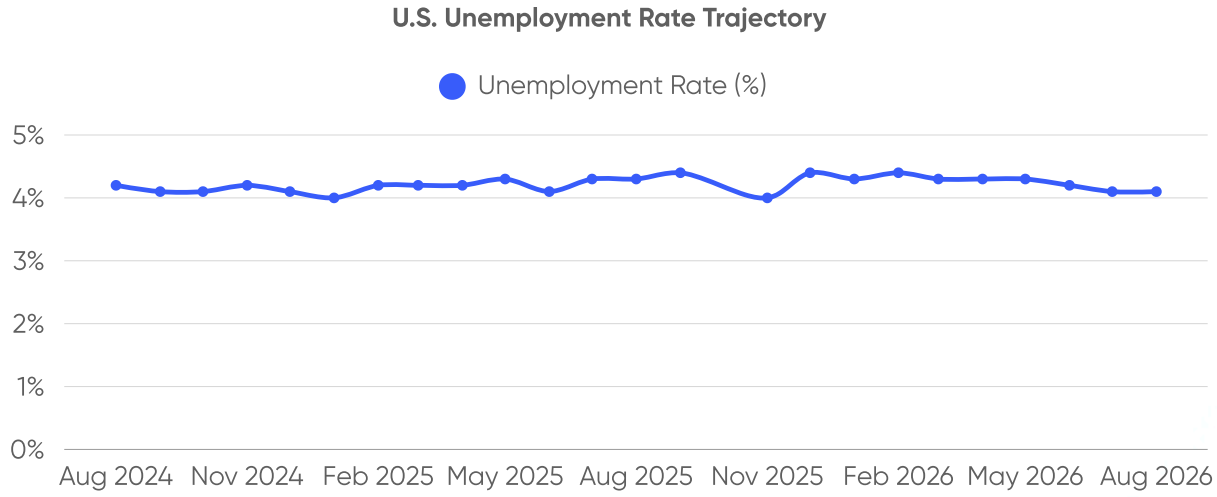
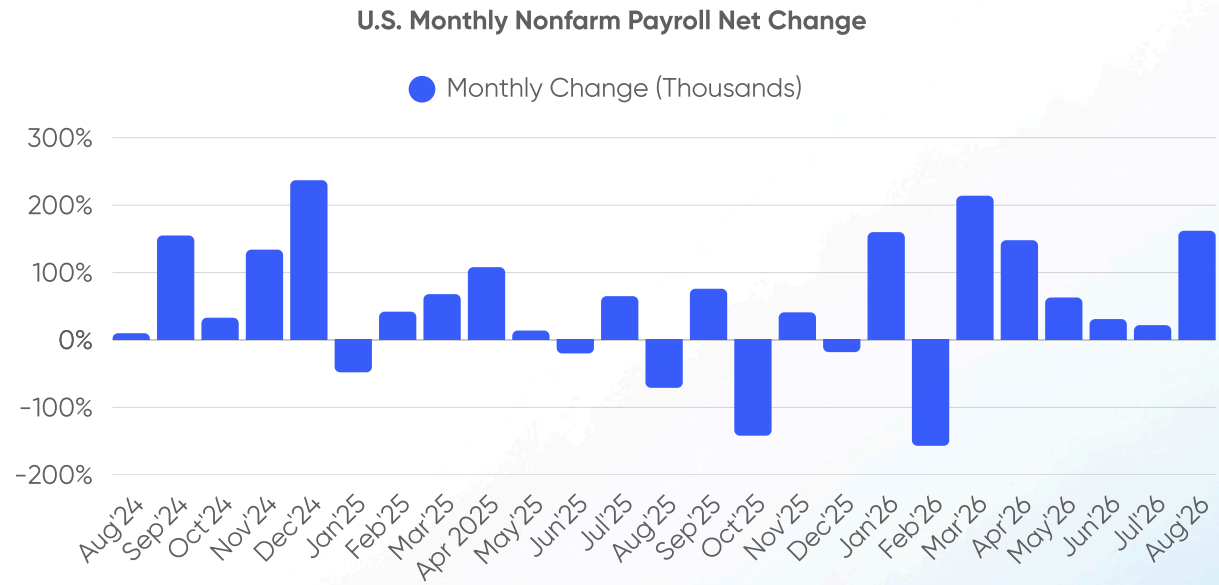
U.S. Payroll Growth: Tech Cuts, Debt

After a period of slowing job growth earlier in the summer, the U.S. labor market showed renewed strength in August 2026. Nonfarm payrolls rose by **162,000 jobs**, up sharply from **57,000** in June, while the unemployment rate edged down from **4.2% to 4.1%.** Labor force participation also climbed to **61.6%**, signaling an active job market that continues to bounce back despite broader macroeconomic pressures.





Source: US Nonfarm payroll

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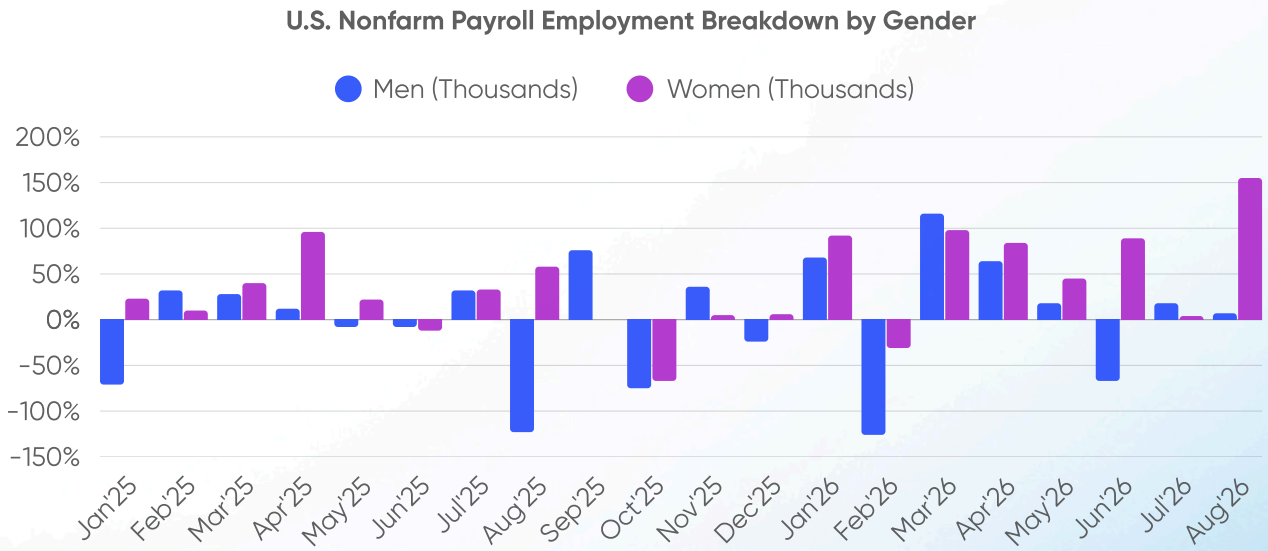
U.S. Payroll Growth: Tech Cuts, Debt

Service sector hiring drove August U.S. payroll growth, offsetting sharp tech layoffs and broader macroeconomic headwinds. It was led by **leisure and hospitality** (+62,000), local government education (+42,000), healthcare (+28,400), construction (+22,000), and manufacturing (+16,000), with female workers accounting for 98% of total gains. Conversely, the information sector lost 23,000 jobs, reflecting AI automation and ongoing structural shifts.



Despite solid hiring, wage growth 3.1% lagged behind inflation 3.4%, squeezing real purchasing power. Compounding these pressures, U.S. national debt reached $40 trillion, pushing up 10 year Treasury yields and long term borrowing costs.



Source: Women account

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U.S. Payroll Growth: Tech Cuts, Debt

What Leaders Should Do

Corporate executives and hiring managers should treat the recent labor market improvement as an opportunity to move from cautious, defensive hiring toward selective growth. Rather than expanding headcount broadly, business leaders should prioritize revenue generating roles while maintaining flexible workforce planning. HR directors and operational managers must regularly reassess hiring plans using labor market conditions to determine when to accelerate recruitment, pause expansion, or redeploy existing talent. This targeted approach allows enterprise decision makers to capture opportunities in a rebounding job market while insulating their organizations against persistent inflationary and fiscal pressures.

How Manatal Helps

As U.S. hiring conditions shift from the weaker trends seen in previous quarters, recruiters need to balance talent reach with tighter control over recruitment spending. Manatal's Premium Job Posting allows recruiters to advertise vacancies across thousands of premium channels from one platform, while selecting the channels, campaign duration, and cost for each posting. This gives hiring teams greater flexibility to scale job advertising when demand strengthens or adjust recruitment spending when hiring conditions soften, without managing multiple job boards separately.

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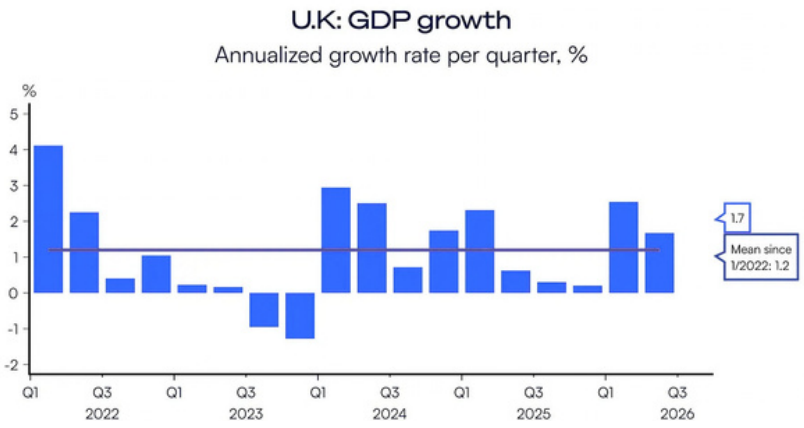
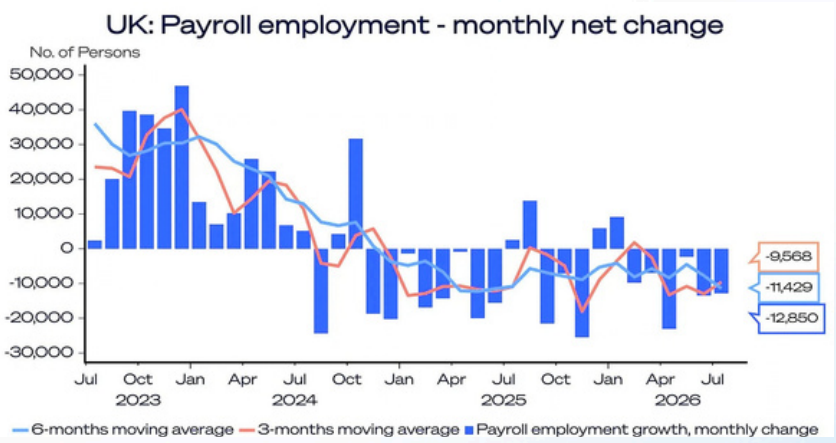
Strong GDP Growth Meets U.K. Job Cuts

When we previously reported on the U.K. labor market in June 2026, the data offered room for cautious optimism, with 1,700 jobs added in May, vacancies near 701,000, and unemployment at 4.9%. By August, the picture had shifted. Despite GDP growth of 2.5% in Q1 and 1.7% in Q2, the labor market continued to shed jobs amid high employment costs, weak consumer spending, and policy uncertainty ahead of the Labour Budget.



Source: Recruitonomics

The latest figures show renewed job losses, with payroll employment falling by 13,000 in July, matching the revised June decline and bringing cumulative cuts since autumn 2024 to 190,000. Retail and hospitality have been hit hardest, losing 140,000 and 100,000 jobs since January 2024, while healthcare added 145,000 jobs over the past two and a half years.



Source: Recruitonomics

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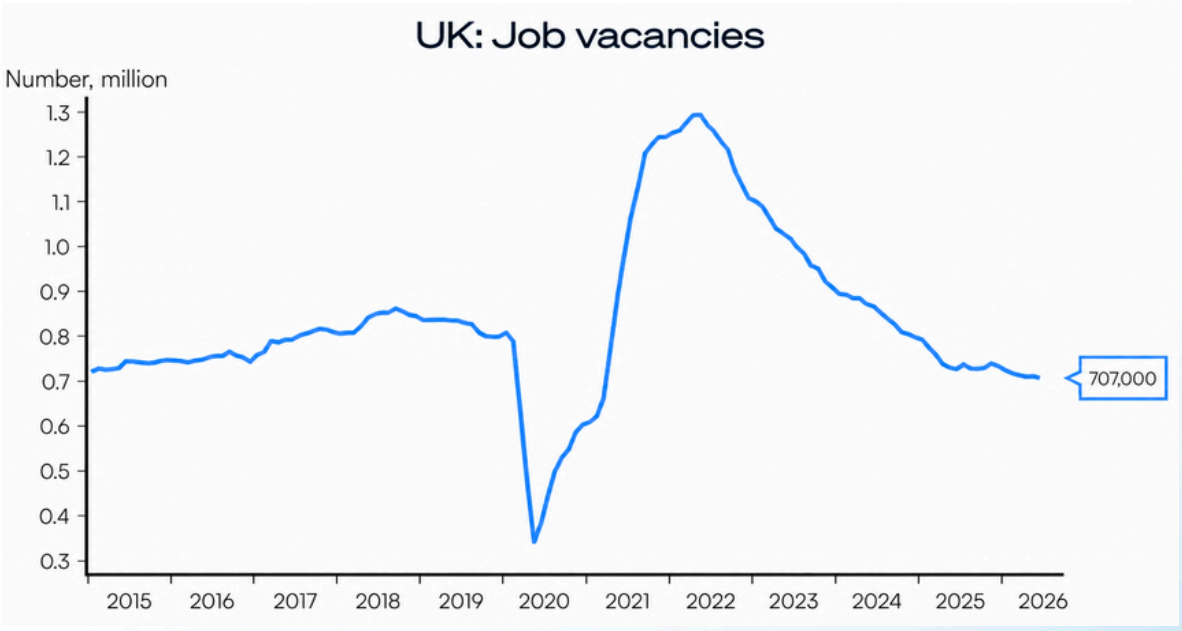
Strong GDP Growth Meets U.K. Job Cuts

Despite strong overall GDP growth, U.K. job market stagnation is severely squeezing entry level opportunities for young workers.

U.K. job vacancies have dipped to 707,000, reaching their lowest level since 2015 and resulting in stagnant worker churn. Meanwhile, overall unemployment holds steady at 4.9%, but youth unemployment ages 18-24 has surged to 14.6% its highest level since the post global Financial Crisis era, exacerbated by rising remote work practices, AI adoption, and reduced part time opportunities.





Source: Recruitonomics

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Strong GDP Growth Meets U.K. Job Cuts

What Leaders Should Do

HR and talent leaders can use AI to improve hiring efficiency and reduce turnover in high volume sectors by automating screening and identifying candidates with stronger role fit and retention potential. Entry level roles can be redesigned around AI enabled workflows and apprenticeship pathways, while recruitment investment shifts toward resilient sectors such as healthcare and specialized technology. Leaders should also strengthen retention through targeted incentives and flexible staffing models, using workforce data to manage employment costs and adapt as labor policies, regulations, and tax requirements evolve.

How Manatal Helps

High volume sectors such as retail and hospitality face large applicant pools and slower screening. Manatal's AI Interviewer and candidate scoring are a strong fit, automating initial screening and prioritizing candidates by job requirements. In healthcare, where talent demand is stronger, Sourcing Hub and 2,500+ job board integrations expand access to candidates, while Recruitment Analytics helps leaders identify effective sourcing channels and manage hiring costs.

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FOBO: Worker Anxiety Over Skill Obsolescence

A survey conducted by The Harris Poll for ETS reveals that the vast majority of U.S. workers view upskilling not as an optional benefit, but as a requirement to remain employable. However, 58% of respondents report experiencing "FOBO" fear of becoming obsolete due to a lack of relevant technical and operational skills. Anxiety is highest in technology and financial services, where 74% and 73% of employees, respectively, fear displacement.

Despite strong worker readiness to adapt, structural barriers are limiting skill development:



Source: FOBO

These barriers highlight a gap between workers' willingness to upskill and the support available to help them do so. According to findings from The Conference Board, employer sponsored AI training also tends to focus on basic prompt engineering and general AI literacy, rather than advanced competencies such as managing autonomous AI agents or adapting to AI driven workflow changes.

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FOBO: Worker Anxiety Over Skill Obsolescence

What Leaders Should Do

HR and talent leaders could treat FOBO as a workforce planning signal, using emerging skill requirements to anticipate where roles and capabilities may become vulnerable. This creates an opportunity to build clearer career pathways, connect development priorities to future workforce needs, and give employees greater visibility into how their roles can evolve alongside AI. Leaders could also strengthen internal mobility by making progression pathways more visible and creating opportunities for employees to move into emerging roles as their capabilities develop.

How Manatal Helps

Traditional hiring criteria can overlook candidates who have recently developed new skills or credentials. Manatal's AI Recommendation Engine and Candidate Matching are a strong fit, helping recruiters identify candidates based on relevant skills, certifications, and experience rather than relying only on conventional career backgrounds. Customizable screening criteria also make it easier to prioritize the competencies most relevant to emerging roles and broaden the pool of qualified candidates.

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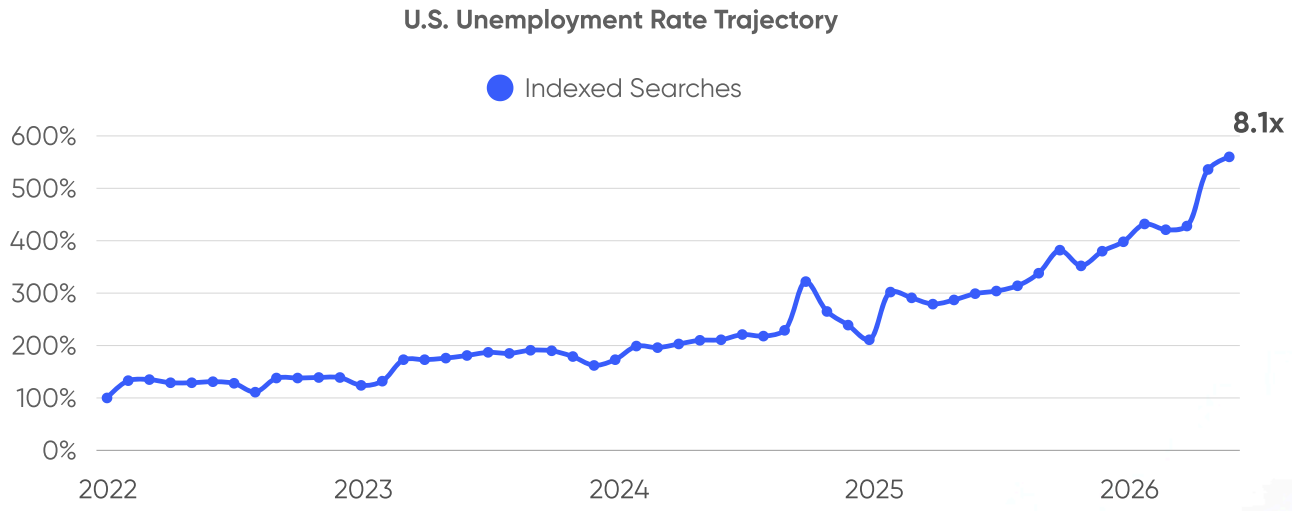
Data Center Hiring Surge: Premium Pay vs. Shift Constraints

Data center hiring demand has accelerated rapidly in 2026, with job searches on Indeed more than doubling since early 2026 and reaching 8.1 times 2022 levels, surpassing 1 million searches. Interest spans both technical and skilled trade roles, with the most common searches including “technician,” “engineer,” and “electrician,” reflecting the broad range of talent needed to build and operate data center infrastructure.



Indexed daily searches including data center keywords, 30-day moving average (Jan 01 2022 = 100), through Jun 30 2026

Source: Data Center Build Out

Most candidates are drawn from nearby talent pools, with 55% applying within the same metropolitan area. However, these roles attract applicants from a wider geographic range than typical U.S. job postings, suggesting employers are competing for specialized skills beyond their local markets.

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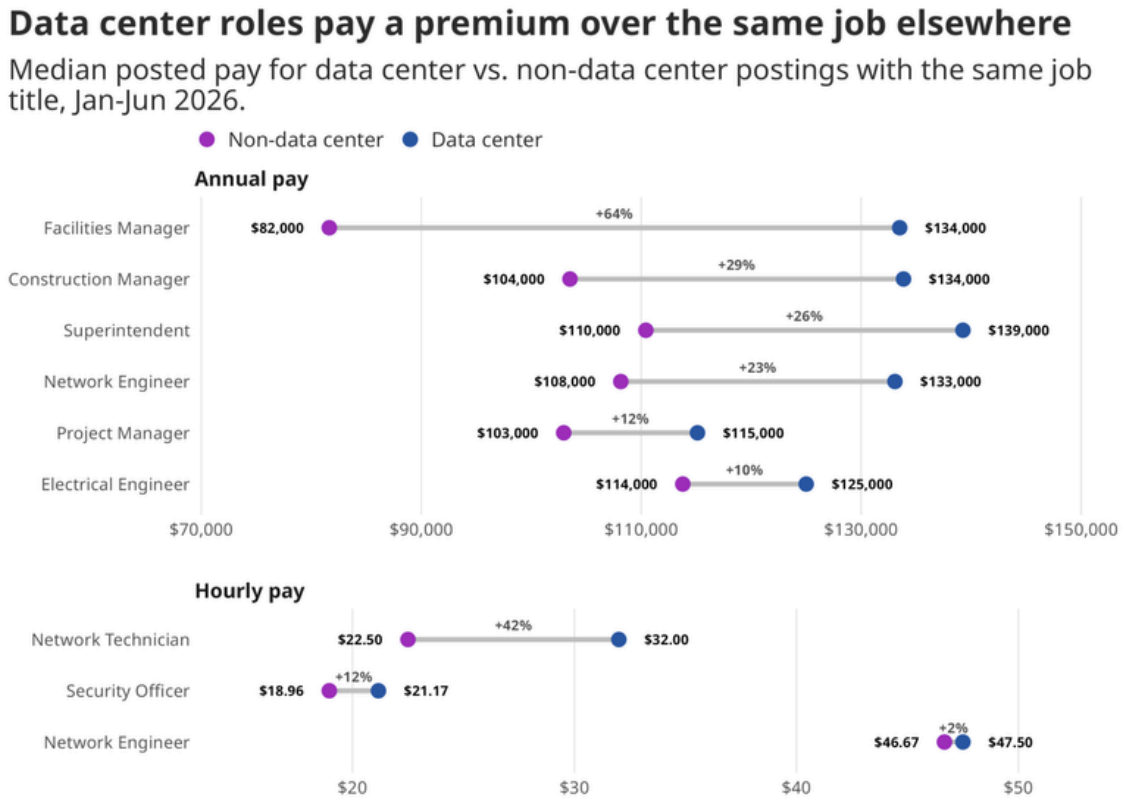
Data Center Hiring Surge: Premium Pay vs. Shift Constraints

Data center roles offer major pay and benefits advantages. Facilities managers earn a median $50,000 more annually than non sector peers, while construction managers, network engineers, and installation workers command up to $30,000 premiums or 42% higher hourly wages. Furthermore, employers heavily emphasize benefits, with 401k plans appearing in 90% of maintenance and 80% of IT support postings far surpassing non data center roles.



Source: Data Center Build Out

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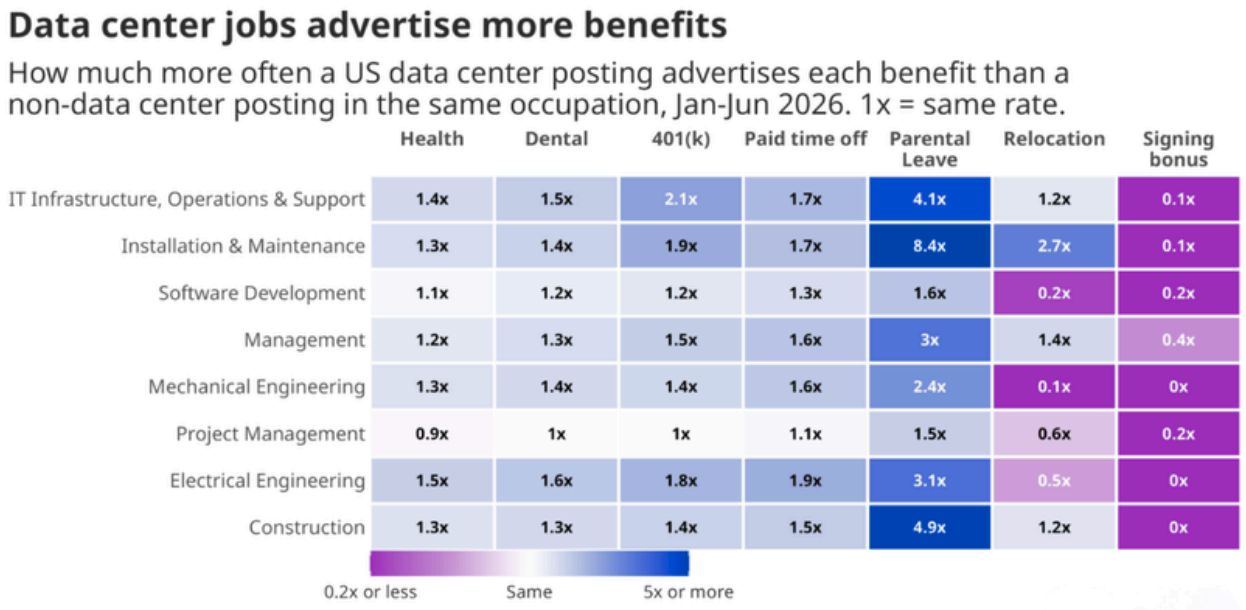
Data Center Hiring Surge: Premium Pay vs. Shift Constraints

However, the sector involves trade offs that complicate talent attraction and retention. Data center IT employees are nearly 40 times more likely to work night shifts, while 26% of job postings require up to 50% travel working conditions that create steep hurdles for recruiters competing for specialized candidates.



Source: Data Center Build Out

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Data Center Hiring Surge: Premium Pay vs. Shift Constraints

What Leaders Should Do

Data Center VPs, Construction Directors, and HR Executives must build robust technical talent processes that balance high volume hiring with long term retention across engineering, technician, and skilled trade roles. Recruitment teams should establish dedicated talent pipelines, structured technical assessments, and transparently market competitive pay and benefits to attract non local candidates. Finally, establishing clear career progression and internal mobility pathways will help convert high demand technical hires into a stable, lasting workforce.

How Manatal Helps

Data center hiring requires recruiters to find specialized talent across a wider geographic area while managing large candidate pools. Manatal's Candidate Sourcing, AI Candidate Enrichment, and AI powered matching are a strong fit, helping recruiters find engineers, technicians, electricians, and skilled trade candidates across multiple channels and quickly identify those who best match each role. Candidate Enrichment adds relevant information to profiles, making it easier to assess and shortlist candidates without adding more manual work.

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Sources

- *UK: August 2026 – Great GDP Figures Offer Some Relief but Job Losses Keep Mounting*
- *Workers report 'FOBO' – a fear of becoming obsolete*
- *Nonfarm Payrolls Jump Unexpectedly in August*
- *The Employment Situation - August 2026*
- *Women account for nearly all new US jobs in August*
- *Working in the Data Center Build-Out*
- *U.S. debt is even worse than it seems, and rising Treasury yields are now an 'all-hands-on-deck situation,' top economist warns*

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Thank You

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