

# Global talent mobility

**How Amsterdam can tap into London as a Creative & Marketing hub**



**MAJOR  
PLAYERS**

# Global talent mobility: How Amsterdam can tap into London as a Creative & Marketing hub

The world's most successful organisations all understand a universal truth: to drive growth, spark innovation and consistently deliver over and above the competition, you need to have the best people in place.

As Owen Fegan, *Creative Director at Mollie*, says, *“A company is comprised of the talent of its people and their collective knowledge. Attracting top talent is a massive focus for Mollie and for me personally, too. Getting the right people for your team is the most important step.”*

Talent is what powers an organisation to outperform, and the data reaffirms this time and again. McKinsey, for example, has shown that high performers are up to 800% more productive in the workplace.

Since top talent is key to driving growth, finding the very best individuals to fill positions at your company isn't just a 'nice to have'. It's an absolute must for any company that wants to thrive in a hyper-competitive marketplace.

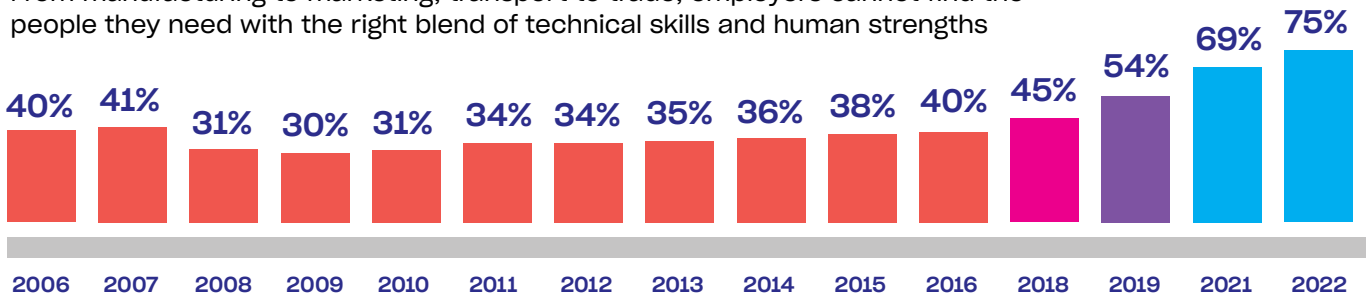
Despite the global economic downturn, there continues to be a clear shortage of top creative and marketing talent.

In 2022, for example, global talent shortages reached new highs, as 75% of employers across sectors agreed they “cannot find the people they need with the right blend of technical skills and human strengths”.

These challenges become even more pronounced in hot-bed markets like Amsterdam that are bucking the trend and defying economic stagnation.

## ► Talent shortages over time

From manufacturing to marketing, transport to trade, employers cannot find the people they need with the right blend of technical skills and human strengths



# Amsterdam's highly competitive and unique talent landscape

Unlike other major economies, the Netherlands continues to outperform on a global scale. In fact, while the UK economy shrank 0.6% in Q2 2022, the Dutch economy grew by 2.6% in the same time period, demonstrating in no uncertain terms the strength of its growth and innovation.

In these market conditions, where one country (the Netherlands) is outperforming many other major Western business hubs, the battle for top talent becomes even more difficult. Let's not forget, Amsterdam is a geographically small city, which only exacerbates these issues and adds further pressure to employers that are looking to source and hire the very best candidates.

As Chris Baylis, Executive Creative Director at Miro, comments,

*"There's a fairly small pool of top creative talent in Amsterdam that's actually available. Many brands still operate with either a Dutch-only or international-only side of the business. I think there's definitely scope to broaden the talent search and facilitate opportunities in different markets."*

In short, established companies, fast-growing scale-ups and aspiring start-ups must now work even harder to find the right creative and marketing talent.

**Don't just take our word for it.**

According to a recent [report](#) released by Startup Amsterdam and the Amsterdam Economic Board, the demand for digital talent has doubled in 2022, reaching a figure of x26 job vacancy openings per available digital worker.

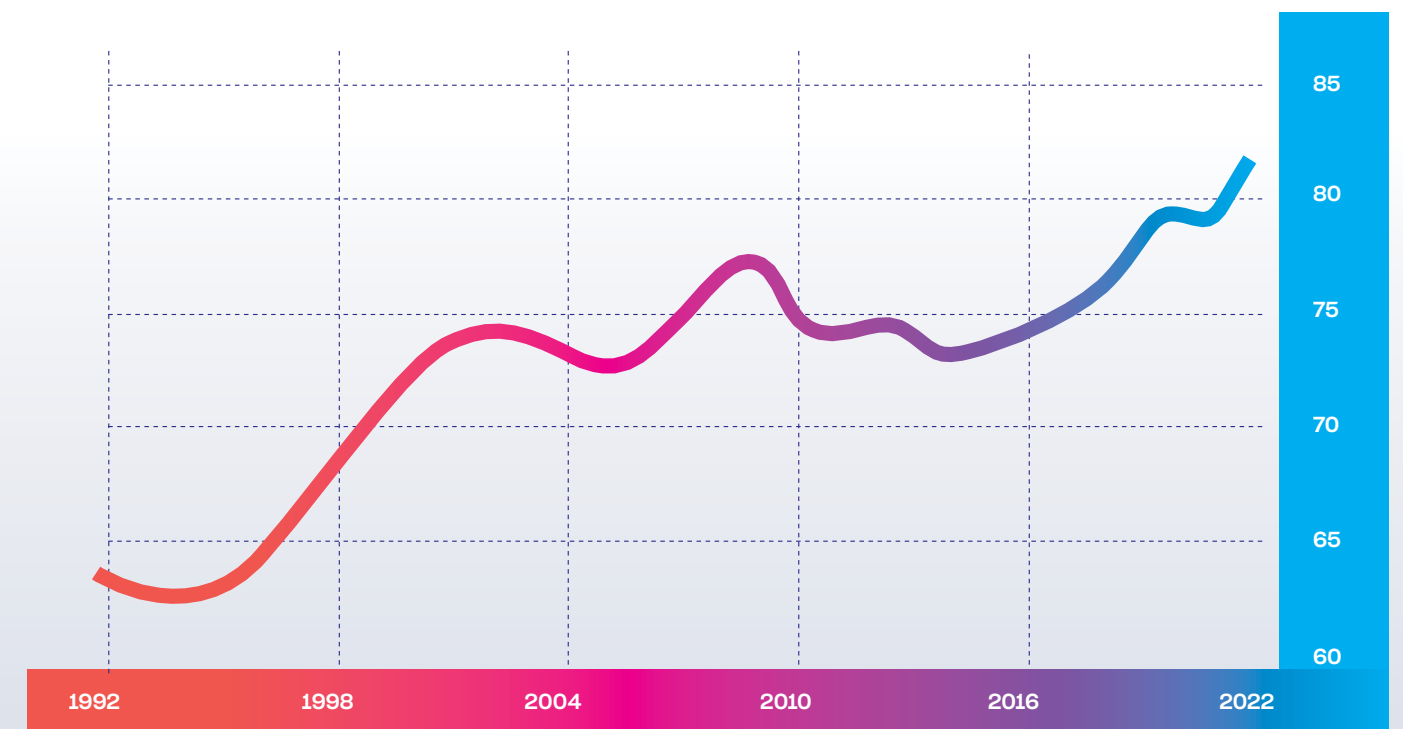
This has led to a highly competitive talent landscape in Amsterdam, as the overall employment rate in the Netherlands **increased** to 81% in 2022, the highest figure since records began.

**Taken as a whole, it's unequivocally clear that:**

1. High performers are essential to driving business innovation, growth and performance
2. There is a shortage of top talent globally, but especially in outperforming, geographically small cities such as Amsterdam
3. Given competitive market conditions, employers in Amsterdam must now work even harder to source, attract and hire the best candidates for the role

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In this report, we'll present a new alternative. Rather than focus on Amsterdam-based recruitment alone, Major Players believes that there is an untapped global talent mobility opportunity waiting to be unlocked. While we continue to deliver top local candidates for businesses located in Amsterdam, we also believe there has never been a better time to look beyond Dutch shores for top creative and marketing talent.

To add a qualitative lens to this report, Major Players sat down and interviewed several senior creative leaders based in Amsterdam. This commentary offers an employer-side perspective and brings real-world, actionable value to our findings.

## We'd like to take a moment to thank our contributors:

- ▶ Chris Baylis, Executive Creative Director at Miro
- ▶ Owen Fegan, Creative Director at Mollie
- ▶ Steven Heywood, CEO at Edelman Amsterdam

# Part 1. The rise of global talent mobility

For Amsterdam-based employers, tapping London as a hub for top talent only makes sense if British candidates are open to a move abroad, right? Well, as we'll see, there is now ample evidence to suggest that many UK employees are not only open to moving abroad but are actively considering relocating to a different country.

First, let's set the scene. Global talent mobility, or hiring without regard to national borders, offers a host of benefits and perks. A global reach widens an employer's talent pool, offers different opportunities for talent acquisitions and can provide teams with a truly diverse workforce.

**Steven Heywood, CEO at Edelman Amsterdam, comments,**

*"We've seen a tremendous growth in our headcount here at Edelman in recent years. With a 50/50 split of Dutch and international talent, this offers international candidates the opportunity to enjoy authentic Amsterdam culture whilst still feeling comfortable working at an English-speaking, international company."*

The pandemic has caused a shift in how candidates view their careers and the marketplace. In fact, over 4.5 million UK workers are **now** considering moving overseas to find better career opportunities and a better quality of life.

**As Mollie's Fegan says,**

*"I think one of the benefits of remote work is that it has opened organisations up to a lot more talent. If you're a candidate from the UK, given Brexit and everything that's happening at the moment, I do believe Europe is becoming far more attractive."*

The data is quite resounding in its implications, as today more than 380,000 UK workers are seeking an immediate relocation within the next 1-2 years. The percentage of those looking to move abroad for work rises substantially among younger UK adults aged between 18-34 (24%), compared to those aged 35 and older (11%).

When queried on the reasons why professionals would consider moving abroad for work, the top reasons given were:



Given the current economic conditions and cost of living crisis within the UK, it's not surprising to see there has been a marked increase in the number of working professionals that would be open to a move abroad.

Dutch employers would be wise to look at global talent mobility not as a cursory fad – but rather as a more widespread shift in how, when and where British talent are willing to work and live.

# Part 2. London as a hub for Creative and Marketing talent

There is no city quite like London.

Home to almost 9 million residents, there's no denying that London houses some of the world's best creative and marketing talent. According to **research** from Startup Genome, London is the leading destination for talent to scale a start-up outside of Silicon Valley.

But London's prowess isn't only restricted to its start-ups and scale-ups. Famous marketing and creative agencies such as BBH, Mother and Saatchi & Saatchi all share their origin stories on the cobblestone streets of London.

It's no small feat that the UK's digital marketing sector is the **biggest** in Europe and the third-largest in the world. In 2021 alone, for example, the UK marketing industry **exported** £11 billion of services to clients across EMEA, North America and Oceania.

These impressive figures are ultimately made possible by the depth and quality of its creative and marketing talent. After all, it's the people driving these companies and agencies that make these achievements possible.

According to new **data**, 72% of London's creative workforce are considered "highly qualified", meaning they hold a bachelor's or master's degree in the creative and marketing industries (this is notably higher than the 45% national average).

This blend of creativity, knowledge, innovation and experience makes London's pool of creative and marketing talent quite unique and attractive to many employers.

**As Mollie's Fegan comments,**

*"I'm finding that candidates are becoming increasingly specialised. I value a breadth of experience which sometimes is difficult to come by, except in larger cities. Sourcing well-rounded talent has definitely become more of a challenge."*

As the UK struggles to get to grips with a mounting economic crisis, this could be an opportune moment for Dutch employers to broaden their talent acquisition outreach to include London-based candidates.

UK inflation, for example, has **soared** to well over 10% as the Pound continues to **lose strength** against other major currencies. These factors are driving the fastest **fall in real pay** for UK employees on record, which presents a rather grim and bleak outlook for British creative and marketing professionals.

As the UK deals with a looming recession, now is the time for Dutch employers to capitalise on these realities and lure top creative and marketing talent across the North Sea.

**72%** of London's creative workforce are considered "highly qualified"



## Part 3: Reduce costs, streamline talent acquisition and drive greater outputs

At Major Players, we're well aware of how difficult it is for many Amsterdam-based employers to source, attract and retain top local talent. While we can provide quick, strategic solutions to these problems (given our deep and rich network of creative and marketing professionals in Amsterdam), it would benefit employers to also consider adopting a more strategic approach.

As Mollie's Fegan comments,

*"Dutch scale-ups and start-ups are only scratching the surface of global talent. One of the reasons Mollie attracted me is because they embrace and understand the benefits of international talent."*

By applying this global talent-mobility lens to the hiring process, Dutch employers can capitalise on current market trends and make a real splash in markets such as London. This means placing hard-to-fill roles with the best available talent on the market – not just the only available talent in Amsterdam.

As Edelman's Heywood adds,

*"There are certain areas that we've found harder to recruit for in the Amsterdam market that could benefit from a more international outlook. For example, strategy, data and analytics roles are crucial to the success of our business, and in many cases would benefit from a broad range of international perspectives in the role too – so sourcing overseas talent for these roles is a great potential solution."*

Given that so many UK professionals are open to a move abroad, we believe there is a real strategic opportunity at play for forward-thinking Dutch employers to tap London's wealth of creative and marketing talent.

## So, what are the benefits of adopting this mobility-led approach?

Good question. At Major Players, we believe there are several key benefits to this strategy that can have an immediate impact on your sourcing and hiring objectives. Let's explore a few of these now.

### Reduce time to hire

Since London is a global hotspot for top creative talent, this makes hiring much more efficient as it reduces the stress of sourcing from a small, competitive pool in Amsterdam. Roles that sometimes take months to fill can be cut in time dramatically, since the latest surveys estimate that there are up to two million creative professionals employed in London alone.

### Reduce costs

Given the competitive nature of the Amsterdam talent marketplace, hiring the right talent is not only difficult but also very expensive. Instead, Dutch employers can outsource this hiring strategy to experts that understand and have engagement with the best talent in the UK. This reduces the cost of hiring top local talent and also means employers don't need to operationalise this strategy themselves – you can rely on experts such as Major Players to handle it for you.

### Hire talent capable of quality outputs

When it comes to the creative and marketing industries, quality of output is an essential driver to lasting success, not only at an organisational level but also on a personal level. London-based talent has been tested and proven at the highest level, so Dutch employers can feel confident knowing that this talent pool is highly qualified and capable of delivering exceptional results.

### Embrace new perspectives and ideas

In the creative and marketing world, new ideas and outside-the-box thinking is an incredibly valuable currency. London-based talent can offer Dutch businesses different perspectives and new ways of thinking that not only provide tactical campaign benefits, but also strengthen the wider creative function of a business.

### Capitalise on a rare opportunity

It's quite fortuitous that the cards have aligned in such a way that millions of UK professionals are now open to a career move abroad. For Dutch employers, this is a unique opportunity to strengthen your talent acquisition pipeline and attract tried-and-tested talent that can have an immediate impact on your business.

# Next steps: How to get started

**This is a time of great opportunity and growth for Dutch based businesses that want to explore new ways to attract top talent.**

**Here's how you can get started.**

With 2023 quickly approaching, it's important to solidify your talent objectives for the upcoming year, acknowledge any areas of weakness and lean into strategic partnerships where relevant to drive growth.

At Major Players, we take pride in being recognised as Europe's leading Digital, Marketing, Creative and Tech talent agency. We partner with many businesses in Amsterdam and the surrounding area to help employers meet their talent acquisition goals.

We understand the global influence of Amsterdam. In fact, we've even created a specialist Netherlands division at Major Players, investing heavily in this dynamic market.

Whether you simply want to tap into our valuable market insights or would like us to deliver a range of bespoke hiring solutions, Major Players can help you find the right talent for the right role.

Netherlands Country Manager, Joe Faulker, is available to meet face-to-face or virtually to discuss your specific talent objectives and how we can support your business moving forward. To get in touch, please reach out via the links below.



Simply contact him at:



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## Joe Faulkner

**Joe Faulkner is the Major Players NL Country Manager, heading up our offering to clients in the NL Market.**

Supported by a dedicated team of specialists, Joe is passionate about delivering outstanding service by taking a truly consultative approach to delivering Talent solutions.

With a deep understanding of the Digital, Marketing and Tech landscapes and a career spent partnering with ambitious international brands and agencies, Joe has played a key role in the continued expansion of Major Players in recent years. He is now proud to apply his industry expertise to the Amsterdam market, for both clients and candidates alike.

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