



# WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS MARKET OVERVIEW

**UNDER PRESSURE:**

OVERCOMING WORKFORCE CHALLENGES  
IN AN UNPREDICTABLE LABOR MARKET

2025 REPORT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



ABOUT THIS REPORT.....	3
U.S. OVERVIEW .....	6
EUROPE OVERVIEW .....	8
The Netherlands .....	9
Germany, Austria, and Switzerland .....	11
UK and Ireland.....	14
Sweden .....	17
INDIA OVERVIEW.....	18
INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT	
Advancing Life Sciences With AI.....	21
Shaping Emerging Trends In Technology.....	23
A Renewed Focus On The Skills Powering The Energy Sector.....	24
TOP SOLUTIONS.....	26
CITATIONS.....	28

# ABOUT THIS REPORT



The labor market is under constant pressure, shaped by rising costs, shifts in talent availability, and the disruptive possibilities of AI and automation. Companies must navigate these changes while securing the *right* talent at the *right* time—a task that’s becoming increasingly complex in an unpredictable hiring market.

These challenges are redefining workforce priorities. Over the next five years, nearly two-fifths of workers’ current skill sets are expected to evolve or become obsolete. In light of these developments, businesses are prioritizing upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Failing to adapt could leave companies struggling to fill critical roles and remain competitive in an evolving job market. As hiring complexities increase, organizations need agile, data-driven solutions to optimize their talent acquisition and management efforts.

Economic factors, including rising costs and inflation, further complicate hiring. Global unemployment remained at a historic low of 5 percent in 2024, underscoring the continued challenges of a tight labor market.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, demographic shifts—such as aging populations in higher-income economies and expanding working-age

populations in lower-income regions—are also reshaping workforce dynamics. These trends are driving demand for skills in talent management, teaching, mentoring, and adaptability.

In today’s labor market, businesses need flexible, strategic workforce solutions to stay ahead. AgileOne provides end-to-end talent management services, from statement of work (SOW) arrangements that enhance project-based hiring efficiency to contingent and recruitment workforce solutions that help companies scale with agility. Whether navigating skills shortages, rising costs, or the evolving role of AI in hiring, we empower organizations with tailored MSP, RPO, and workforce optimization strategies that drive efficiency, cost savings, and long-term success.

In this edition of AgileOne’s *Workforce Solutions Market Overview*, we examine the key factors shaping today’s labor market and offer strategic solutions backed by our industry-leading expertise. As part of our expansive market research, we provide the latest data and economic insights affecting the United States, Europe, and India, with a focus on key trends in the life sciences, technology, and energy sectors.

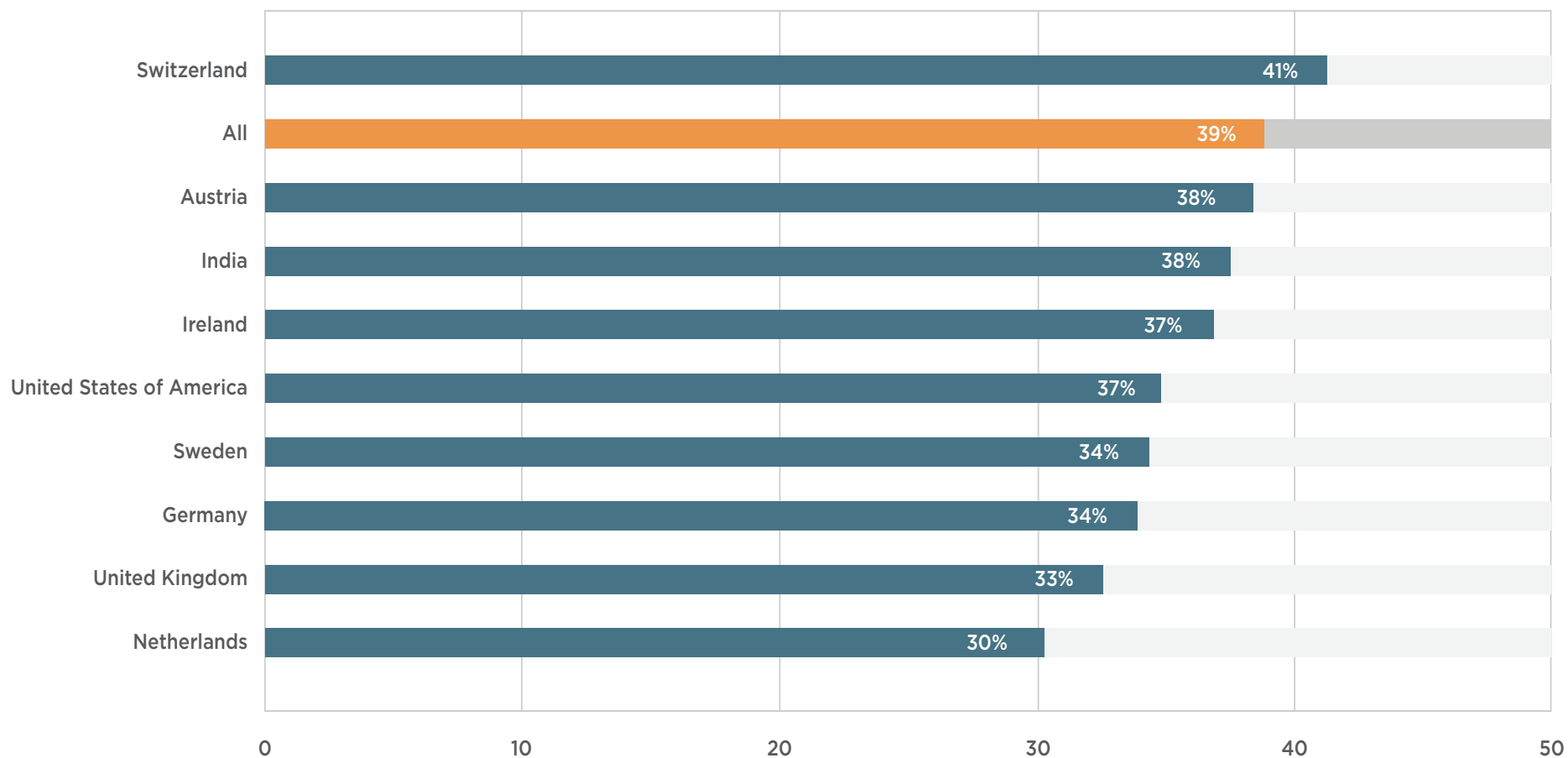
**Global unemployment remained at a historic low of 5 percent in 2024, underscoring the continued challenges of a tight labor market.<sup>2</sup>**

# ABOUT THIS REPORT



## The Future of Jobs Report 2025, World Economic Forum, January 7, 2025

Share of workers' core skills projected to change, 2025-2030





## Why AgileOne?

### **One world. One workforce. AgileOne.**

In rapidly changing times, AgileOne is at your side. We are the one workforce solutions provider to offer solutions that are truly comprehensive, combining technology expertise, consulting services, and exceptional delivery to meet all your talent attraction and management needs.

We help companies manage the unexpected through a comprehensive suite of workforce solutions:

### **RPO**

#### **Recruitment Process Outsourcing**

Our RPO services provide scalable hiring support, ensuring that businesses attract top talent while improving efficiency and reducing costs.

### **SOW**

#### **Statement of Work (SOW) Management**

We help businesses gain visibility and control over project-based labor, ensuring better budget alignment and workforce performance.

### **MSP**

#### **Managed Service Provider (MSP)**

For organizations managing external labor, our MSP programs optimize contingent workforce strategies, leveraging technology and supplier management to drive cost savings and compliance.

### **CWS**

#### **Contingent Workforce Solutions (CWS)**

Our expertise ensures that businesses have access to flexible talent pools, helping them scale their workforce based on demand.

# U.S. OVERVIEW

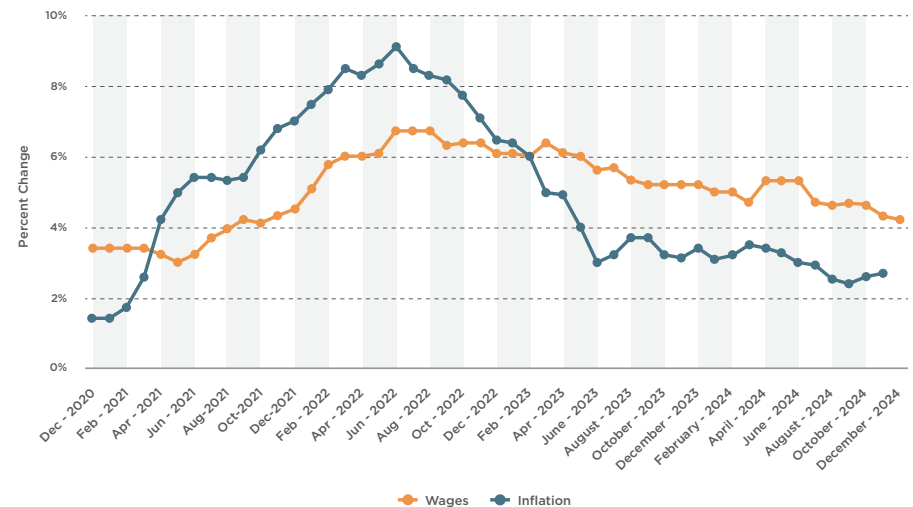


**E**volving trade policies, ongoing inflation, a skilled talent shortage, and the rise of artificial intelligence are reshaping the U.S. economy. As a result, businesses are adjusting their workforce strategies, focusing on flexibility to remain competitive in a changing market. With hiring and employment models continuing to shift, both employers and workers will need to adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

Trade policy has once again become a defining force in the labor market. With new tariffs in place or under consideration, industries that rely on international supply chains are reassessing their workforce needs. The manufacturing and logistics sectors are expected to bear the brunt of this effort, with some economists warning that these trade tensions could continue to impact the job market for some time to come.<sup>4</sup> The uncertainty surrounding trade agreements has made long-term workforce planning more challenging, forcing businesses to weigh short-term cost management against long-term growth strategies. At the same time, it could also drive a historic investment in American jobs. Recently, Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer TSMC announced that it is investing \$100 billion in U.S. chip plants, creating tens of thousands of jobs, while Apple is investing \$500 billion to add 20,000 jobs across manufacturing and AI infrastructure.<sup>5 6</sup>

Still, trade uncertainty is adding complexity to an already challenging economic outlook, with inflation remaining a persistent concern years into the post-pandemic recovery. The annual inflation rate rose to 3 percent in January, up from 2.9 percent in December, impacting both business operations and workers' financial stability.<sup>8</sup> Though wages have increased in recent years, they have struggled to keep pace with the rising cost of living, placing significant strain on middle-income workers.<sup>9</sup> In response, employees are seeking additional income sources, demanding more flexibility, or transitioning to new industries. Employers, meanwhile, are facing the difficult task of balancing competitive wages with profitability, making workforce retention a challenge. As businesses manage these shifts, many are turning to alternative hiring models—such as contingent staffing—to maintain agility in an unpredictable market.

**Difference between the inflation rate and growth of wages<sup>7</sup>**



# U.S. OVERVIEW



At the same time, employers are contending with a widening skills gap. Key industries such as healthcare, accounting, and logistics face ongoing talent shortages exacerbated by federal job cuts and demographic shifts. Many businesses are unable to fill critical positions, leading to productivity bottlenecks and increased competition for qualified professionals. In response, organizations are investing in upskilling initiatives and leveraging technology to fill gaps. For instance, IBM's SkillsBuild program offers over 1,000 free online courses in areas like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data analysis, aiming to equip learners with market-relevant skills.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Amazon's Upskilling 2025 initiative commits \$1.2 billion to provide 300,000 employees with training in fields like machine learning and robotics, enhancing their capabilities for in-demand roles.<sup>13</sup>

However, skill-building initiatives take time to yield results and are unfolding against the backdrop of rapid shifts in how work is performed. Artificial intelligence and automation are accelerating this transformation, fundamentally altering job functions across multiple industries.

Recent research indicates that more than 30 percent of U.S. workers could see at least half of their tasks impacted by generative AI, while approximately 85 percent might experience a more limited effect on their job roles.<sup>15</sup> While these technologies create new opportunities, they also introduce uncertainty, particularly as federal labor protections surrounding AI have been rolled back, raising concerns about job security

**More than 30 percent of U.S. workers could see at least half of their tasks impacted by generative AI, while approximately 85 percent might experience a more limited effect on their job roles.<sup>14</sup>**

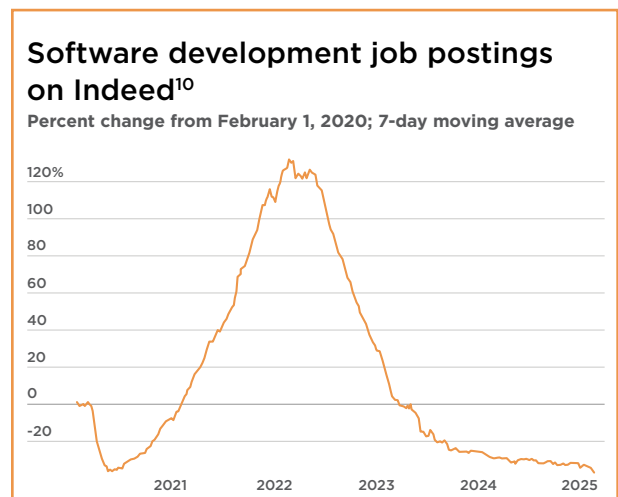
and ethical implementation. Businesses should be careful to balance technological adoption with workforce development, ensuring that automation

enhances productivity without leaving workers behind. Those who invest in structured upskilling and responsible AI integration will be best positioned to undergo this transformation.

Amid these shifts, workforce flexibility has become a strategic imperative. Organizations are turning to contingent staff, services procurement, and project-based hiring models to manage uncertainty. By leveraging a more adaptable workforce, companies can respond to economic fluctuations, access specialized skills on demand, and mitigate risks associated with

long-term hiring commitments. The ability to scale staffing needs efficiently will be a defining factor in business resilience moving forward. In this rapidly evolving job market, those who embrace flexibility, invest in skills development, and manage technological change thoughtfully will be best positioned for sustained success.

**The recovery of job opportunities has been uneven. While accounting job postings have risen nearly 23 percent above pre-pandemic levels, software development job postings have dropped by 35 percent.<sup>11</sup>**



# EUROPE OVERVIEW



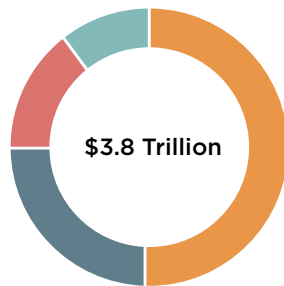
Europe's labor market is undergoing significant changes as a result of economic pressures and regional differences in employment practices. In Western Europe, particularly the UK and Ireland, temporary staffing remains a common approach, offering businesses flexibility in an unpredictable economy. Meanwhile, Eastern Europe leans more heavily on statement of work (SOW) arrangements, which allow companies to bring in specialized talent for project-based work while navigating local labor laws and compliance requirements.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these ongoing changes, the demand for employment stability remains strong across much of Europe. Freelancing and

temporary work continue to play a role, but many workers still prioritize long-term job security. As businesses adjust to economic uncertainties and technological advancements, structured workforce solutions like SOW are likely to become even more prevalent.

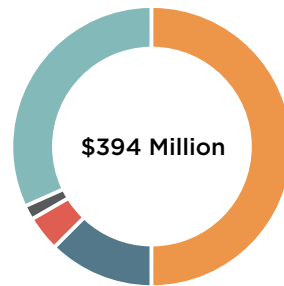
AgileOne provides workforce solutions that simplify hiring, maintain compliance, and adapt to evolving demands. In the following pages, we offer an overview of key labor market statistics across Europe, highlighting the regional trends and workforce dynamics shaping our conversations with clients.

## Sizing up the services procurement market in the EU and UK



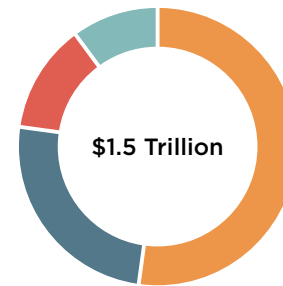
Global Staffing Industry

1929	Contingent Labor
933	Other Temps
553	ICs
17	Platforms
394	SOW



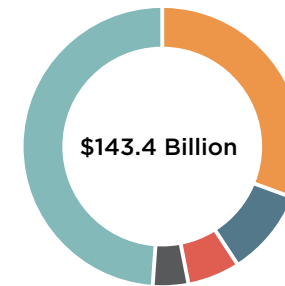
Global SOW Market

50%	USA
12%	Germany
4%	UK
2%	Canada
32%	SOW



EU/UK Staffing Industry

765.5	Contingent Labor
367	Other Temps
185.2	ICs
3.2	Platforms
143.4	SOW



EU/UK SOW Market

31%	Germany
10%	UK
6%	France
4%	Italy
49%	Rest of Europe

# NETHERLANDS



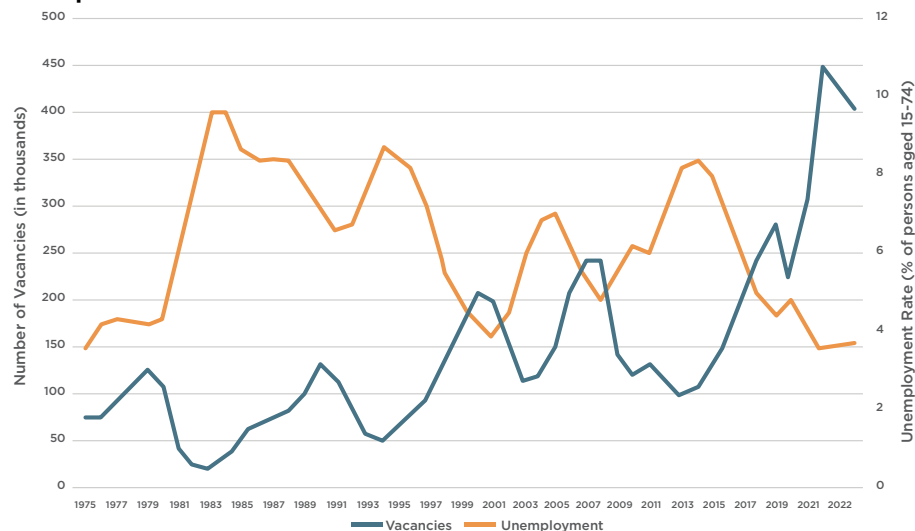
The Dutch labor market remained remarkably stable in 2024, with the unemployment rate holding at 3.7 percent, just slightly above the 3.6 percent recorded in 2023. Such a steady trend is uncommon, with the last instance of such minimal fluctuation occurring in 1988—though at that time, unemployment was significantly higher at 8.3 percent. While the current rate suggests a resilient labor force, the slight upward trend may signal early signs of cooling. However, compared to historical standards, the Netherlands continues to experience one of the lowest unemployment rates in its modern economic history.<sup>17</sup>

In 2024, job vacancies remained historically high at 404,000 unfilled positions, despite a 5 percent decline for the second consecutive year, signaling a slowdown in labor demand. However, openings are still nearly four times higher than during the last sustained decline in 2013, underscoring the persistent tightness of the Dutch labor market. Employers, particularly in healthcare and technology, continue to face hiring challenges, with long-term projections indicating that vacancies will remain elevated, reinforcing concerns over ongoing labor shortages.<sup>19</sup>

Economic growth in the Netherlands is expected to pick up, rising from 0.9 percent in 2024 to 1.6 percent in both 2025 and 2026. This increase will be driven by stronger private consumption and external demand, though inflationary pressures will persist. Inflation is projected to gradually decrease from 3.2 percent in 2024 to 2.5 percent in 2026, reflecting ongoing wage growth and tight labor market conditions.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the Netherlands' Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) declined slightly in January 2025 to 48.4, indicating continued economic contraction, whereas the global PMI rose to 50.1, signaling expansion elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

**In 2024**  
job vacancies remained historically high at **404,000 unfilled positions**, despite a **5 percent decline** for the second consecutive year

**Low unemployment and high vacancies continue to complicate the Dutch labor market<sup>18</sup>**



## Inflation

is projected to gradually decrease from **3.2 percent in 2024** to **2.5 percent in 2026<sup>20</sup>**

# NETHERLANDS



One of the most significant recent labor market shifts stems from the enforcement of the DBA (Deregulating Beoordeling Arbeidsrelaties) Act, which is impacting freelancers and temporary workers. The Dutch government has begun cracking down on “false” self-employment, leading to a sharp decline in the number of registered freelancers, with more than 4,000 fewer self-employed workers in January 2025 alone. The healthcare sector, which relies heavily on freelancers, was particularly affected, losing nearly 2,000 self-employed workers in a month. While the law aims to prevent companies from misclassifying workers to avoid taxes and social security contributions, it also introduces new hiring challenges, especially in industries dependent on flexible labor.<sup>22</sup> As enforcement intensifies, businesses may need to adapt their workforce strategies to comply with stricter regulations while maintaining operational efficiency.

**The DBA (Deregulating Beoordeling Arbeidsrelaties) Act regulates the classification of workers as employees or independent contractors (zzp'ers) to prevent false self-employment and ensure proper tax and social security contributions.**

**Under this law, businesses must use approved model agreements to define working relationships, and companies misclassifying workers as freelancers risk fines and retroactive tax liabilities.**





Germany's labor market is feeling the weight of broader economic struggles as geopolitical tensions and weakening global trade continue to dampen growth. While world trade is expected to expand by 2 percent in 2025, Germany is not likely to realize the full benefits, with exports rising a mere 0.3 percent over 2024 levels. Imports, on the other hand, are likely to increase slightly more, by 1 percent, as companies seek to circumvent potential tariff barriers from the United States.<sup>24</sup> These pressures, combined with inflationary concerns and stagnant consumer spending, are forcing companies to rethink their workforce strategies, prioritizing flexibility over long-term hiring commitments.

For years, Germany's labor market appeared resilient despite broader economic challenges. However, that assumption is fading. Employment levels are expected to drop slightly in 2025, averaging just over 46 million—about 70,000 fewer jobs than the previous year. While this may not seem drastic, the deeper concern lies in hiring trends: companies are growing more

cautious, choosing to freeze recruitment rather than expand their workforce. As a result, job seekers are encountering more hurdles, and the unemployment rate is projected to rise from 6 percent to 6.2 percent this year.<sup>25</sup> This slowdown in hiring

is particularly evident in manufacturing, where production is showing tentative signs of recovery, yet job cuts are accelerating at the fastest pace in months.<sup>26</sup>

Against this backdrop, statement of work (SOW) services procurement is gaining momentum.

Instead of committing to full-time hires, companies are leveraging SOW agreements to access specialized talent on a project-by-project basis. This approach allows businesses to define deliverables, timelines, and costs upfront, creating a workforce strategy that adapts to market fluctuations. With rising costs, slower exports, and cautious consumer spending, flexibility is key. SOW agreements empower companies to stay competitive and innovative while managing labor costs, ensuring they have the right skills at the right time. Skilled professionals also benefit, securing high-value projects while maintaining their independence.

**By adopting SOW agreements, businesses can remain competitive and innovative while controlling labor costs, ensuring they have the right skills at the right time.**

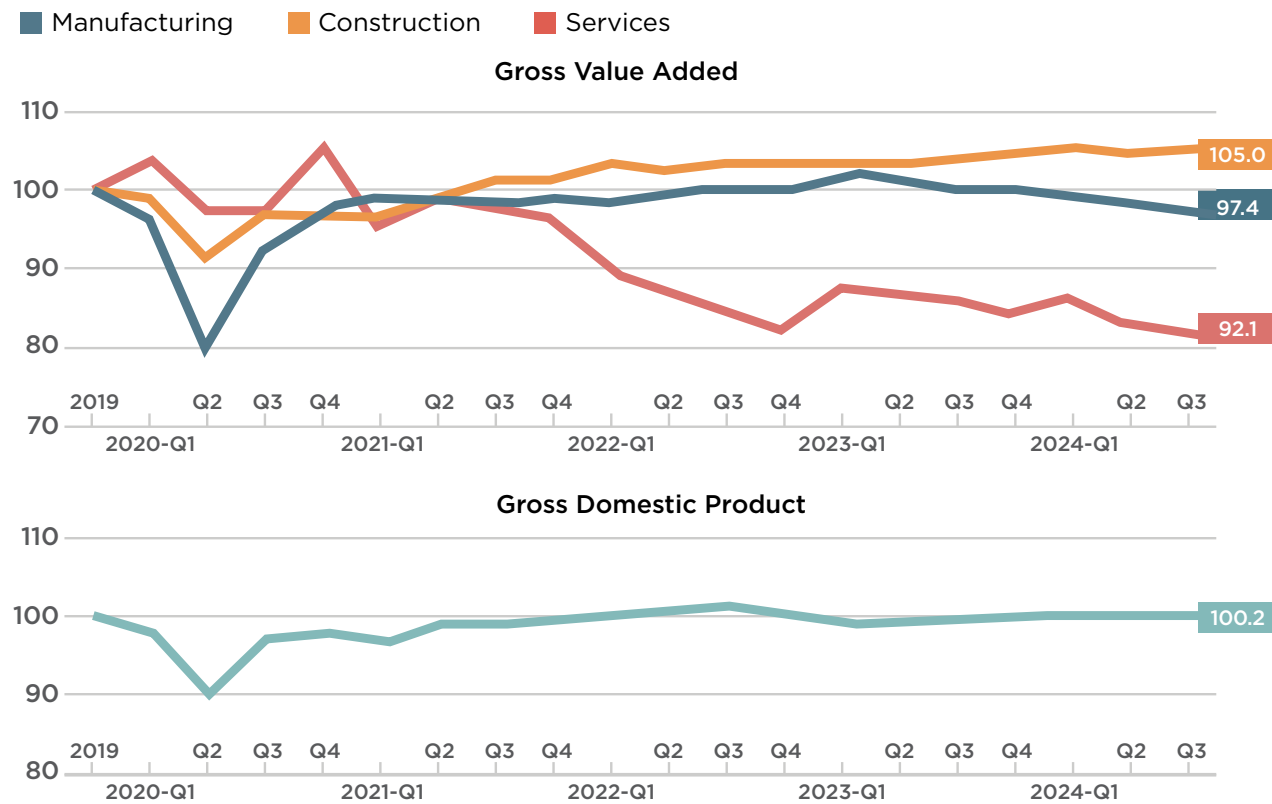
## Employment levels

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# GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND SWITZERLAND



## Stagnation in Germany<sup>23</sup> Annual average in 2019 = 100



# GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND SWITZERLAND



Germany is just one country within the DACH region that is grappling with economic headwinds. Austria's labor market is also facing moderate challenges as economic growth remains sluggish, in line with broader trends. The unemployment rate increased from 5.1 percent in 2023 to 5.3 percent in 2024 and is expected to stay at this level throughout 2025, as businesses exercise caution in hiring amid economic uncertainty.<sup>27</sup> While traditional industries, such as manufacturing and retail, are experiencing slower job creation, Austria's tech sector is expanding rapidly. With an average monthly salary of €4,677 and an annual growth rate of 8.7 percent, the tech industry has seen its share of total employment rise from 4.2 percent to 5.8 percent. Additionally, Austria's strong vocational training system continues to provide a steady pipeline of skilled workers, helping to mitigate long-term labor shortages in specialized fields. In this environment, targeted investments in high-growth sectors and innovation-driven industries offer a potential path forward for Austria's labor market.<sup>28</sup>

Elsewhere, Switzerland's labor market is flashing mixed signals amid economic changes. In the fourth quarter of last year, the number of employed individuals rose by 0.6 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, reaching approximately 5.387 million people.<sup>29</sup> Despite this uptick in employment, the unemployment rate experienced a notable increase, climbing from 2.5 percent in October to 3 percent in January.<sup>30</sup> This rise in unemployment aligns with a decline in the Swiss Labor Market Barometer, which reached its second-lowest level since the survey's inception in May 2021, indicating a pessimistic outlook for the labor market in the coming months.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, the manufacturing sector continues to face challenges, with indicators reflecting a deepening downturn as of early 2025.<sup>32</sup> These developments suggest that while employment figures have grown modestly, underlying weaknesses in certain sectors and rising unemployment rates pose concerns for Switzerland's stability.



# UK & IRELAND

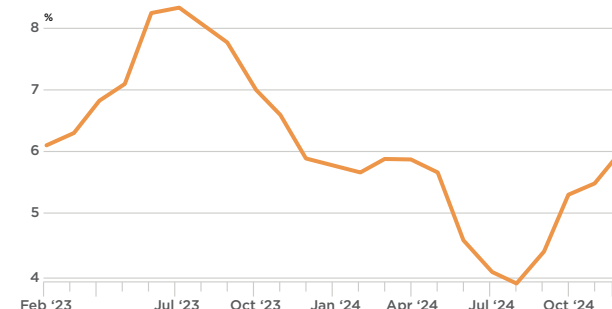


After years of persistent tightness, the UK labor market entered 2025 in a more balanced state. Throughout 2022 and 2023, a combination of historically low unemployment and persistently high job vacancies made recruitment more challenging than usual. This tightness was largely driven by an increase in economic inactivity since the pandemic, coupled with lower net migration from the EU, reducing the available workforce. However, by late 2024, demand for labor had slowed significantly, causing job vacancies to decline from their peak to 819,000, which was still slightly above pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, unemployment rose to 4.4 percent at the end of 2024, signaling a softening of the labor market as hiring demand adjusted to broader economic conditions.<sup>33</sup>

Despite this cooling, wage growth continued to accelerate at the end of 2024, creating additional challenges for businesses and policymakers alike. Average weekly regular earnings saw a 5.9 percent year-over-year increase in the three months to December, placing further pressure on the Bank of England's efforts to control inflation.<sup>35</sup> Employers are also facing rising costs due to an increase in National Insurance Contributions (NIC) taking effect in April 2025, which many anticipate will significantly impact their bottom line. A recent survey revealed that two-fifths of employers expect the NIC hike to raise costs substantially while rising minimum wages and business rates add further financial strain. In response, 25 percent of businesses indicated they planned to make layoffs—the highest proportion outside the pandemic period since 2014—while 16 percent expected a decrease in overall staffing levels in early 2025.<sup>36</sup>

Facing economic changes, contingent labor is emerging as a crucial solution for businesses striving to remain agile. While the recruitment landscape faced the usual seasonal slowdown in December, early 2025 has already seen a strong rebound in job vacancies and hiring activity. Contract positions, in particular, have surged, marking a 25 percent year-over-year increase and reaching their highest level in 20 months.<sup>37</sup> Against the odds, recruitment firms are demonstrating resilience, achieving notable placement growth and maintaining strong résumé submission rates, underscoring the adaptability of businesses that are leveraging temporary and contract staffing. At the same time, firms like AgileOne have provided value beyond staffing by helping companies stay compliant with labor laws, including those enforced by the UK's HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) department. HMRC has been actively cracking down on the misclassification of workers as independent contractors that should be classified as employees. Such misclassification can result in significant fines, backdated tax liabilities, and other penalties for businesses.<sup>38</sup>

Average weekly earnings and annual growth rates<sup>34</sup>



## Unemployment

rose to **4.4 percent at the end of 2024**, signaling a **softening of the labor market** as hiring demand adjusted to broader economic conditions.<sup>33</sup>

# UK & IRELAND



In addition to managing the complexities of the labor market, a true staffing partner can help companies navigate the UK's evolving skills landscape. The rapid pace of technological advancement and new policy initiatives have fundamentally altered workforce demands, with the top 20 skills for the average UK job changing by 33 percent since 2021.<sup>40</sup> This transformation has made upskilling and continuous learning more critical than ever. To meet this demand, businesses should consider investing in workforce development and working closely with education and training providers to ensure employees acquire the necessary skills. At the same time, national and regional policymakers must base reforms on concrete evidence of industry needs, ensuring that the evolving skills framework aligns with economic priorities. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning and adaptability, the UK labor market can remain competitive and resilient in the face of ongoing change.

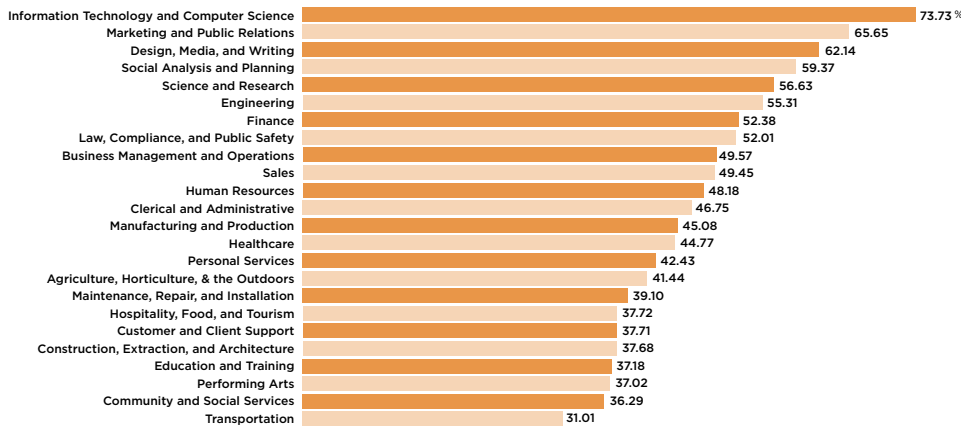
Meanwhile, Ireland's labor market remains strong, powered in part by a growing workforce. High net inward migration and increased female labor market participation have expanded labor supply, helping to sustain employment levels even as job postings have gradually normalized from their early 2022 peak. Despite this moderation, postings remain 19 percent above pre-pandemic levels, indicating continued demand for talent.<sup>42</sup> Unemployment has also improved, with the rate for those aged 15-74 falling to 4.0 percent in Q4 2024, down from 4.2 percent a year earlier.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, the European Central Bank's multiple interest rate cuts in recent months are set to provide additional economic support.





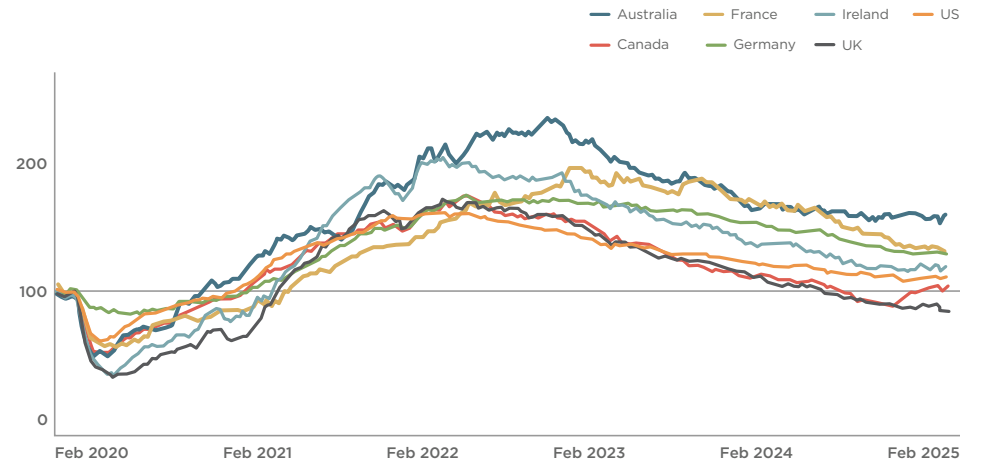
## Index of career areas by skills change since 2021<sup>39</sup>

Measuring how much the UK's skills landscape has changed from 2021 to 2024



## Indeed Job Postings Index of Ireland<sup>41</sup>

(1 Feb 2020 = 100), seasonally adjusted, to 17 January 2025



# SWEDEN



Sweden's labor market faced headwinds in 2024 as rising unemployment and declining overall employment signaled a slowdown in economic momentum. The number of unemployed individuals grew by 41,000, pushing the unemployment rate to 8.4 percent—an increase of 0.7 percentage points from the previous year. Despite these challenges, Sweden continues to maintain a high labor force participation rate of more than 75 percent, reflecting the country's traditionally strong workforce engagement.<sup>44</sup>

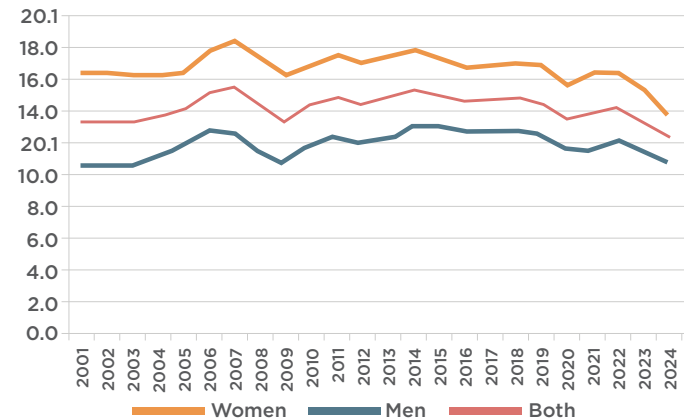
As Sweden's labor market adapts to new economic realities, it is coming to terms with new regulatory frameworks, too. The Agency Work Act is reshaping the composition of the workforce, with a particular impact on blue-collar employees. Designed to enhance job security for staffing agency workers, the law mandates that individuals who have been assigned to the same company for more than 24 months within a 36-month period be offered permanent employment or compensation equivalent to two months' salary. With the initial 24-month period concluding at the end of 2024, businesses are now facing critical decisions on workforce planning.<sup>45</sup> The effects are already visible, as the number of temporary employees dropped by 62,000 last year, while permanent employment grew by 50,000.<sup>46</sup>

Still, the benefits of a contingent staffing model remain significant, helping explain why approximately one in ten workers in Sweden is employed on a temporary basis.<sup>48</sup> Temporary workers allow businesses to scale their workforce in response to fluctuating demand, economic shifts, or seasonal peaks. This agility is particularly crucial in industries with cyclical workloads, such as retail, logistics, and healthcare. Additionally, workforce solutions partners like AgileOne play a key role in bridging skill gaps by quickly supplying specialized talent, reducing hiring costs and administrative burdens for companies.

In addition to the Agency Work Act, several other factors are shaping the Swedish labor market. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is driving greater transparency in supply chains, requiring organizations to report sustainability data as part of their

annual financial disclosures.<sup>49</sup> This has led to increased demand for tracking and managing workforce-related spending, particularly in contingent labor, as companies seek better insights into their employment and procurement practices. It has also led to added costs for companies, with estimates reaching up to €1 million annually for listed companies.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) is impacting the financial sector by imposing stricter IT risk management requirements, influencing hiring decisions for contingent workers with expertise in cybersecurity and compliance.<sup>51</sup>

Share of temporary employees (aged 15-74) by gender<sup>47</sup>



**AgileOne's services procurement solutions help businesses manage evolving regulations and compliance demands by providing the visibility, tracking, and governance needed to manage workforce-related risks.**



India's labor market is set for significant expansion in 2025, driven by economic growth, evolving industry trends, and the continued digital transformation of key sectors. With the country's GDP expected to grow between 6.3 percent and 6.8 percent by 2026, the job market is on track to see a 9 percent increase in hiring across various industries this year, particularly in AI and machine learning, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), pharmaceuticals, aviation, and banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI). The government's focus on infrastructure development and fiscal consolidation further supports long-term employment growth, while an influx of foreign direct investment is creating new opportunities for skilled professionals.<sup>53 54</sup>

One of the most notable trends shaping India's job market is the rapid expansion of AI and machine learning roles, which saw a 36 percent hiring increase in 2024 and are expected to grow further in 2025.<sup>55</sup> Emerging technologies, including cybersecurity, quantum computing, and edge computing, are fueling demand for specialized talent as companies invest heavily in digital transformation and automation. At the same time, traditional sectors such as FMCG and pharma are experiencing hiring booms, benefiting from increased consumer demand, shifting consumption patterns, and industry advancements. Meanwhile, buoyed by rising domestic travel and new air routes, the aviation industry is also contributing to job creation as airlines and airport operators expand their workforce to accommodate increasing passenger traffic.<sup>56</sup> In this context, contract-based employment is proving essential in meeting the sector's need for skilled professionals in areas such as data analytics, risk management, and digital banking solutions.

Geographically, India's job market is diversifying beyond traditional metropolitan hubs, signaling a shift in hiring patterns and economic activity. Southern cities like Chennai and Bangalore are leading job growth, with hiring increases of 35 percent and 21 percent, respectively.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, smaller cities such as Jaipur, Coimbatore, and Jodhpur are emerging as key players in the job market due to their lower operational costs, growing talent pools, and improving infrastructure. This regional hiring shift is helping to distribute economic opportunities more evenly across the country, reducing dependence on traditional employment centers like Mumbai, Delhi, and Hyderabad. Companies are also recognizing the benefits of decentralization, leveraging the availability of skilled professionals in smaller cities while managing costs more effectively. The rise of remote and hybrid work models has further enabled this transition, allowing businesses to tap into talent from a broader geographical spread, driving workforce participation and fostering economic inclusivity.<sup>58</sup>

## Snapshot: Top hiring trends<sup>59</sup>

### Top Job Roles in 2024

Job Role	% share
Data Analysts/Scientists	14%
Digital Marketing Specialists	12%
Software Developers	10%
Product Managers	5%
Project Managers	5%

### Most In-Demand Skills in 2024

Skill	% share
AI/ML	21%
Data Analysis	18%
Digital Marketing	12%
Java	10%
DevOps	5%

### Salary Growth in Jobs Offered in 2024

Experience Level	% growth
0-3 years	2%-4%
4-6 years	3%- 5%
7-10 years	3%- 5%
11-15 years	5%-10%
15+ years	8%-10%

# INDIA



Despite the positive momentum, several challenges remain, with the potential to impact long-term employment sustainability. A growing skills gap, particularly in AI and machine learning, cybersecurity, and fintech, poses a hurdle to sustained employment growth. Many companies are struggling to find professionals with the necessary expertise, necessitating large-scale upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Additionally, a shortage of leadership talent, especially in executive roles, is prompting organizations to invest in leadership development programs. Retaining high-salary employees is becoming more difficult as competition for skilled talent intensifies.<sup>60</sup> Businesses are also facing challenges in integrating contingent workers into their teams while ensuring compliance with India's complex labor laws. Maintaining workforce cohesion and ensuring consistent quality from contract employees requires investment in management tools and digital workforce solutions, such as vendor management systems (VMS), to streamline operations.

To address these challenges, companies are focusing on strategic talent development. Investment in reskilling programs is critical to bridging the gap between current workforce capabilities and industry demands. Leadership development pipelines are being established to ensure a steady supply of executive talent, while recruitment efforts in emerging cities are helping to sustain hiring momentum. Additionally, companies are depending more on recent graduates, particularly in creative industries and entry-level roles, to build a strong foundation for future workforce needs. Meanwhile, businesses embracing contingent labor are adopting best practices for managing contract-based workers, such as defining clear roles, fostering inclusion in company culture, and leveraging technology for seamless workforce management. AI-driven recruitment platforms, freelance marketplaces, and digital collaboration tools are helping companies efficiently manage their contingent workforce while optimizing productivity.





# INDIA

## Key industries poised for growth<sup>61</sup>

Several industries are set to see substantial growth and investment. As government policies, technological advancements, and shifting consumer demands reshape the market, these sectors are emerging as key drivers of economic progress:



### Electric Vehicles (EV)

India's EV market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 66.52 percent, driven by government incentives and rising demand for sustainable mobility. The market is projected to reach \$113.99 billion by 2029.



### Renewable Energy

India's renewable energy sector is growing rapidly, with the government aiming for 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030. The sector is expected to attract \$250 billion in investments, making it a promising area for investment.



### Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)

The FMCG sector offers stable growth opportunities, with a projected market value of \$220 billion by 2025, driven by rising incomes and e-commerce.



### Healthcare and Insurance

The healthcare market is set to reach \$320 billion by 2028, with health insurance policy uptake rising, presenting attractive investment opportunities.



### Information Technology (IT)

The IT sector contributes 7.5 percent to India's GDP, driven by digitization and AI. The sector's resilience and growth prospects, aided by government initiatives, make it a strong investment option.



### Infrastructure

The government's \$1.4 trillion National Infrastructure Pipeline and other initiatives make the infrastructure sector a promising area for investment.

# INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT



## Advancing life sciences with AI

Rapid technological advancements, strategic investments, and evolving regulatory landscapes are reshaping the life sciences industry across Europe and the United States. As the demand for innovative therapies, personalized medicine, and digital health solutions continues to rise, companies are accelerating their adoption of cutting-edge technologies to improve patient outcomes and streamline operations.

A significant catalyst for this transformation is the integration of artificial intelligence across many corners of the industry. Companies are leveraging AI to expedite drug discovery, enhance clinical trial designs, and optimize manufacturing processes. For instance, a collaborative project involving the UK Biobank and 14 pharmaceutical companies aims to utilize AI models to analyze extensive proteomic data and improve disease prediction and personalized treatment strategies.<sup>62</sup> This integration of AI not only accelerates research and development but also addresses the growing demand for precision medicine, marking a pivotal shift toward more individualized patient care.

In the United States, there is a notable emphasis on strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities within the life sciences sector, underscored by Eli Lilly's

announcement of a \$27 billion investment to construct four new manufacturing plants across the country. This move is partly in anticipation of potential import tariffs, reflecting a broader industry effort to mitigate supply chain vulnerabilities and align with the federal government's priorities to revitalize American manufacturing.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, lab and research and development leasing activity trended higher in 2024, with a 41 percent year-over-year increase in Q3, indicating a robust demand for research space. Employment in the industry also reached a record 2.1 million workers by October 2024, reflecting a dynamic and fast-growing job market. While growth in the pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing subsector has been sluggish, the biotechnology research and development sector has seen accelerated hiring, adding 10,700 jobs between January and October—a 3.7 percent increase—bringing total employment in the subsector to an all-time high of 303,000. This surge is driven by breakthroughs in cell and gene therapy,

**94 percent**

of life sciences CEOs plan to expand their workforce within the next three years.<sup>63</sup>



a growing need for specialized talent, and sustained investment in next-generation therapeutics, positioning the sector for continued expansion.<sup>65</sup>

Europe's life sciences sector is experiencing significant growth, with the number of newly formed life sciences companies increasing by an estimated 13.5 percent over the past five years.<sup>67</sup> This expansion is particularly notable in countries like Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Germany, which have seen double-digit growth rates upwards of 15 percent. In Switzerland, scientist professional vacancies are projected to grow by 19.3 percent in 2024, with laboratory roles expected to see a 54.2 percent increase in demand.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, the European Union anticipates a 42.4 percent rise in scientific vacancies, reaching approximately 3,835 positions, underscoring a robust demand for skilled professionals across the continent.<sup>69</sup> However, the sector faces challenges in



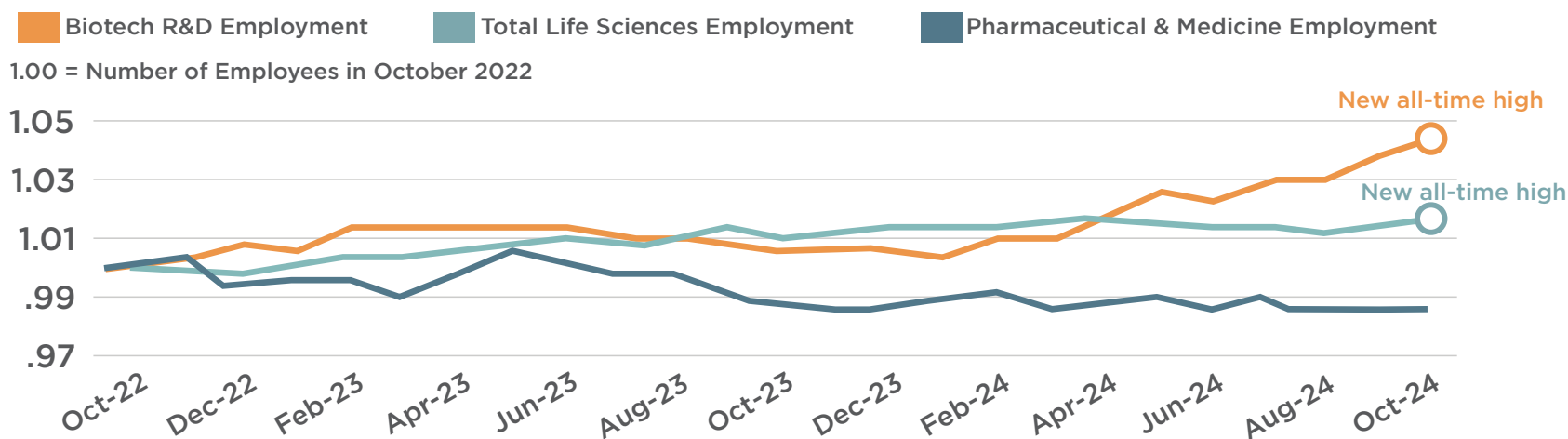
## Advancing life sciences with AI

talent acquisition, particularly in specialized areas such as regulatory affairs, intellectual property, compliance, and data privacy.<sup>70</sup> To address these shortages, companies are adopting strategies like offering professional development opportunities, flexible work arrangements, and clear career progression pathways to attract and retain top talent. These efforts are crucial for sustaining the sector's growth and maintaining its competitive edge in the global market.

Looking ahead, the life sciences industry is poised for continued growth, driven by technological innovations and strategic realignments. The convergence of biology with engineering and computational sciences, known as bioconvergence, is expected to open new avenues for therapeutic development and personalized medicine.<sup>71</sup> However, the industry must navigate challenges such

as regulatory uncertainties, pricing pressures, and the need for a skilled workforce adept at integrating new technologies. Flexible hiring solutions, such as contingent staffing and statement of work (SOW) arrangements, provide a critical strategy for addressing these challenges. With shortages in specialized roles like pathologists and biotech researchers, pharma companies can leverage contract professionals to scale operations efficiently, ensuring that research, clinical trials, and regulatory processes remain on track.<sup>72</sup> SOW agreements offer further agility, allowing organizations to secure specialized expertise for defined projects without long-term overhead costs. By embracing flexible workforce models alongside AI-driven advancements and bioconvergence strategies, life sciences companies can mitigate talent shortages, accelerate innovation, and maintain a competitive edge no matter what the market has in store.

U.S. life sciences employment trends<sup>67</sup>





## Shaping emerging trends in technology

The technology sector is finding itself caught between rapid innovation, shifting workforce demands, and an evolving regulatory landscape. Employing approximately 5.6 million people in the U.S., the sector has maintained a low unemployment rate of 2.9 percent, significantly below the national average of 4 percent.<sup>73</sup> The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is reshaping job roles, particularly in software development. AI-powered coding assistants like GitHub Copilot have boosted efficiency, allowing developers to focus on complex problem-solving rather than repetitive tasks. While these tools are designed to augment rather than replace human workers, some entry-level positions may be at risk.<sup>74</sup> As a result, companies are streamlining teams and becoming more selective in hiring, prioritizing developers who can effectively leverage AI tools alongside strong problem-solving and communication skills.

In Europe, the demand for tech talent is surging. Notably, the role of data protection officers has gained prominence, reflecting the shifting regulatory environment and the growing importance of data security and privacy. Despite these developments, only 20 percent of tech companies in Europe anticipate hiring in the next six months, indicating a cautious approach to expansion.<sup>76</sup> This underscores the

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need for employers to navigate the dynamic environment effectively, balancing the demand for innovation with regulatory compliance and workforce considerations. Additionally, Europe's tech workforce has grown to 3.5 million professionals, demonstrating a substantial increase in the number of people employed in the sector and putting Europe on track to potentially match the U.S. tech workforce within five years.<sup>77</sup>

The proliferation of AI technologies is a common factor influencing labor markets in both the U.S. and Europe. While AI has the potential to automate routine tasks, leading to some concerns about job displacement, it also creates opportunities for workers to engage in more complex problem-solving activities. For instance, AI coding tools have increased efficiency, allowing developers to focus on more intricate aspects of their work. However, this shift necessitates a workforce adept at leveraging these new technologies—especially as the technology sector continues to expand. The European Commission predicts that the digital economy will grow by 12 percent annually through 2025, including IT services, software development, and AI applications. This growth is expected to create high



demand for data scientists, machine learning engineers, and IT specialists.<sup>78</sup>

In response to these changes, there is a growing emphasis on regulatory measures and workforce development initiatives. For example, the California Labor Federation is advocating for new regulations to protect worker privacy amid the rise of AI-driven workplace surveillance.<sup>79</sup> Even smaller U.S. cities like Tulsa, Oklahoma, are investing in transforming into tech hubs to attract and retain tech talent, thereby revitalizing local economies.<sup>80</sup> These efforts reflect a broader recognition of the need to balance technological innovation with ethical considerations and the well-being of the workforce, ensuring that the benefits of technological advancements are equitably distributed. Moreover, the European Union has launched the Susa EU project with €12.4 million in funding to enhance the digital competencies of healthcare professionals, aiming to integrate digital health data into care practices and address a critical skill gap in the healthcare workforce.<sup>81</sup>



## A renewed focus on the skills powering the energy sector

The global energy utilities industry is powering a once-in-a-generation shift to a low-carbon future, operating under an imperative to increase the adoption of renewable energy sources. This shift is creating new opportunities for innovation and economic growth, but it is also presenting substantial challenges in workforce development.

In the United States, policies promoting domestic manufacturing and clean energy production have spurred a surge in demand for renewable energy in recent years. The solar sector has gained the most traction, potentially achieving a 34 percent growth rate to become the fastest-growing energy source by the end of 2025.

This expansion is forcing clean energy employers to double down in their pursuit of skilled labor to support the

development, installation, and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure. However, despite this growing demand, the sector faces a shortage of trained professionals, which is exacerbated by an aging workforce and the slow pace of workforce retraining programs. With more than half of the current

utility workforce having fewer than 10 years of experience, there is a pressing need for upskilling and career development to ensure industry resilience.<sup>83</sup> In response, many utilities are ramping up hiring efforts and investing in comprehensive workforce development programs, all while navigating cost efficiency and operational demands.

Similarly, the European energy sector is expanding its workforce to support the continent's ambitious climate goals, driven by policy initiatives such as the "Clean Industrial Deal," which seeks to help high-emission industries

transition to net-zero emissions. This plan includes measures designed to boost clean tech companies, reduce energy costs for businesses and households, and ease environmental reporting requirements for small and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>84</sup> While these efforts are crucial for driving



**16 million people**  
Globally, the renewable energy sector employed about 16 million people as of 2023, with solar photovoltaics being the largest employer.<sup>86</sup>

Europe's energy transition, challenges persist in ensuring a balanced shift for workers in traditional energy sectors. The European gas industry's recent decision to abandon an agreement to retrain workers for the low-carbon economy underscores the complexities involved in workforce transition. Many workers in fossil fuel-related industries remain uncertain about their future job prospects, with concerns over job security, retraining costs, and the geographic availability of new employment opportunities.<sup>85</sup> If the workforce transition is not managed carefully, it could lead to significant social and economic disruptions, particularly in regions that have historically relied on fossil fuel industries for employment and economic stability.

The shift toward renewable energy is also influencing employment trends. Globally, the renewable energy sector employed

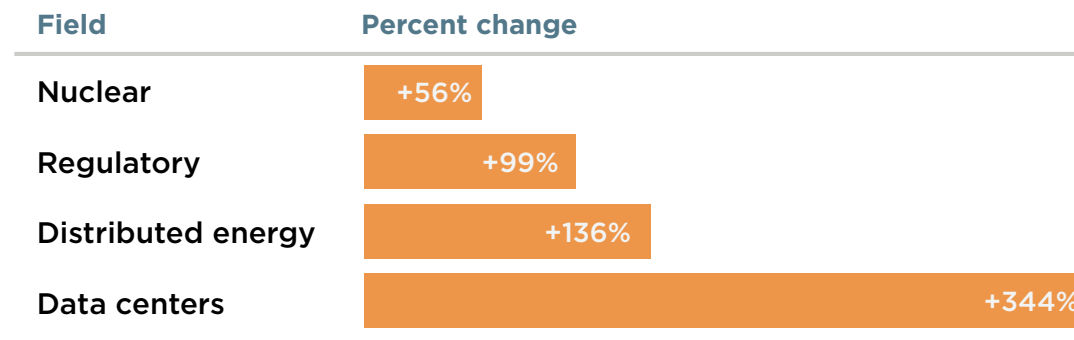


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about 16 million people as of 2023, with solar photovoltaics being the largest employer.<sup>87</sup> However, as of February 2024, the supply of workforce for solar energy is lagging behind demand, as educational institutions worldwide still produce more workforce for fossil fuels than for renewable energy industries.<sup>88</sup> Political dynamics are also reshaping the industry's future, with the potential to shift focus from renewable energy toward fossil fuel production. If policy incentives for renewables are weakened, workforce development efforts could be stymied, slowing the transition to a sustainable energy economy and creating uncertainty for job growth in the sector.

To address these challenges, there is a growing emphasis on workforce development and retraining programs. In the UK, for example, the government has launched the Energy Skills Passport to facilitate the transition of workers from the oil and gas sector to the renewable energy industry, recognizing that 90 percent of these workers possess transferable skills.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, in Germany, the renewable energy sector employed approximately 387,700 people in 2022, marking a 15 percent increase from the previous year and reaching the highest employment level in a decade.<sup>90</sup> These initiatives underscore the importance of aligning workforce skills with the evolving demands of the energy sector to ensure a smooth and equitable transition to a sustainable energy future.

Rise in U.S. job postings across key fields<sup>82</sup>





Navigating today's labor market requires a strategic approach to workforce management. AgileOne helps businesses adapt to rising costs, shifting talent availability, and the impact of AI through contingent hiring, MSP programs, and SOW management. Our RPO services support upskilling and reskilling initiatives, ensuring that companies build a sustainable talent pipeline.

With economic pressures and demographic shifts complicating hiring, AgileOne delivers data-driven insights and flexible workforce solutions to help businesses stay ahead. From supplier management to workforce optimization, we provide the agility and expertise needed to streamline hiring, reduce costs, and build a resilient workforce.

**Here are some of the leading strategies we're recommending to help organizations anticipate risks and foster a flexible workforce:**

## **1** Identify creative solutions to uncover your spend on talent

Understanding your total spend on talent is more critical than ever as businesses continue to experience high costs in a complex economy. In recent years, companies have faced financial pressures due to labor market shifts, supply chain disruptions, and inflation, leading many to scale back on capital expenditures, travel, salaries, and even workforce size. While inflation remains uncertain, the reality is that cost pressures remain. To stay ahead, organizations should consider strategic approaches to identifying and managing workforce expenses, leveraging creative solutions to uncover hidden costs and optimize spending. By gaining full visibility into your talent, you can make informed decisions that drive efficiency without compromising workforce quality.

## **2** Empower your workforce through AI-driven innovation

AI is transforming the workplace by creating new opportunities, enhancing productivity, and allowing employees to focus on more meaningful, creative tasks. Rather than replacing human talent, AI can serve as a powerful tool to augment and complement your workforce, providing better data, deeper insights, and more efficient workflows. By integrating AI-driven solutions, you can enable your teams to make smarter decisions, streamline processes, and ultimately work more effectively. As businesses continue to evolve, leveraging AI as a strategic asset will be key to driving your innovation and long-term success.

## **3** Future-proof your workforce through reskilling

With nearly 60 percent of workers requiring significant reskilling by 2027, businesses have no choice but to take a proactive approach to workforce development.<sup>91</sup> As industries evolve and new technologies emerge, staying competitive means anticipating skill gaps and preparing employees for the future. Investing in upskilling and reskilling initiatives ensures that talent remains relevant and fosters a culture of continuous learning and adaptability. By implementing robust training programs and educational opportunities, you can equip your team with the tools needed to handle changing job demands, drive innovation, and enhance overall productivity.

# TOP SOLUTIONS



## 4 Maximize savings and strengthen your workforce with direct sourcing

Direct Sourcing is a proven way to reduce costs while strengthening your employer brand and candidate engagement. By attracting talent directly and building a dedicated talent pool, employers can minimize advertising expenses, streamline hiring efforts, and better align candidates with company culture. This approach lowers hard costs and drives soft savings through increased employee satisfaction, reduced attrition, and decreased expenses related to rehiring and training. AgileOne helps companies take MSP programs to the next level by maximizing the value of known talent sources, such as corporate career pages, alumni networks, freelancers, and contractors. With our experienced direct sourcing team managing your talent community, you'll be able to track, engage, and onboard high-quality talent at lower rates, ultimately saving time and money while securing the best candidates for your business.

## 5 Conduct a supplier rationalization assessment

Many companies assume that working with more suppliers will lead to a deeper talent pool. In reality, overlapping candidate sources often result in inefficiencies and missed cost-saving opportunities. When supplier contracts are spread too thin, businesses lose out on valuable volume discounts and struggle to maintain a streamlined workforce strategy. That's where supplier rationalization comes in. This proven procurement strategy involves assessing supplier performance, pricing, delivery capabilities, and strategic alignment to identify the partners that truly add value. At AgileOne, we assist companies with optimizing their supplier base, ensuring they work with the right partners to maximize efficiency and reduce costs. By strategically narrowing your supplier pool, you can achieve real savings and strengthen supplier relationships, leading to a higher-quality and more consistent contingent workforce.

## 6 Leverage RPO to scale recruitment efficiently

Companies today face fluctuating talent demands that make maintaining an internal recruiting team costly and inefficient. That's where RPO comes in. Rather than absorbing the expense of a full-time recruiting function, businesses can tap into an RPO partner like AgileOne to scale hiring efforts with agility and precision. An RPO has access to the right talent, leveraging social recruiting, employer branding, and data-driven sourcing strategies to attract high-quality candidates. Whether augmenting internal recruiting resources or managing the entire hiring process, an RPO solution provides the flexibility and expertise you need to meet evolving workforce demands—without the overhead.



From cutting-edge technologies to award-winning services, AgileOne has the expertise to provide true total talent management with access to world-class workforce solutions and technologies configured to meet your unique enterprise needs. We are minority/woman-owned, with operations across the globe.

### Services:

- Managed services program (MSP)
- Recruitment process outsourcing (RPO)
- Vendor management system (VMS)
- Direct sourcing
- Science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) recruiting
- Payroll & contractor validation services (AllSourcePPS)

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