

Salary and Work Insights Guide 2026

pivotal

Welcome

We're proud to have received nearly 1,000 responses to this year's Salary & Work Insights Survey, our highest number yet, surpassing last year's total of just under 800. This year, we've gone deeper than ever before to paint the most vivid picture yet of how professionals across marketing, sales, media and creative are working, evolving and adapting to change.

Once again, the appetite for change is striking: 62.1% plan to switch jobs within the next 12 months, and 38.5% are actively seeking new roles right now. The market's momentum shows no signs of slowing down and talent is moving, and companies that delay decisions risk missing out on exceptional candidates with multiple offers in play. In another sign of positivity - 10% more professionals (45%) received a pay rise in the past 12 months than in the preceding 12 month period.

One story that has crept up throughout the year is the return-to-office mandate. Hybrid working is still the norm, but 30.9% of professionals say their office days have increased in 2025. And while AI continues to dominate industry conversation, its role is no longer hypothetical. Daily and weekly use is widespread, but so too is caution: 72.1% are at least slightly concerned about becoming overly reliant on AI tools. The best businesses are balancing innovation with enablement, ensuring people have both the skills and autonomy to use technology responsibly.

The year ahead looks bright, but competitive. Talent is active, informed and values driven. They're looking for more than salary: clarity, culture and balance now weigh just as heavily. For hiring managers, that means refining EVP, speeding up process, and making every offer count.

Our Salary & Work Insights Guide 2026 brings together these insights, exploring salaries, benefits, working patterns, AI, generational shifts and retention trends, to help you understand what's next in hiring, and plan for 2026 with confidence.



David, Chris & Justin
Founders of Pivotal London

"62.1% plan to switch jobs within the next 12 months, and 38.5% are actively seeking new roles right now."

Contents

Welcome ---------- 2
Recruitment Market Trends ---------- 4
Survey Overview ---------- 5
Key Insights ---------- 6
2025 vs 2026: What's Changed? ---------- 7
Benefits ---------- 8
Working Arrangements ---------- 9
AI ---------- 10
Generational Differences ---------- 11
Gender Differences ---------- 12
Retention ---------- 13
Hiring and Planning ---------- 14
Agency ---------- 15
Media Planning ---------- 16
SEO / Programmatic ---------- 17
Creative ---------- 18
PR ---------- 19
Creative Strategy & Video for Performance Media ---------- 20
Marketing & Growth ---------- 21
B2B Marketing ---------- 24
AdTech / MarTech / SaaS ---------- 26
Ready to Build What's Next? ---------- 29



Recruitment Market Trends

We saw a fast start to 2025, with job flow up 36% year-on-year in Q1. After a cautious end to 2024, budgets reopened and confidence returned, particularly across growth and eCommerce roles. Many teams that had delayed hiring through Q4 came back to market in January, creating a wave of briefs in the first quarter.

Things slowed through spring as some brands paused to review spend and restructure teams, which led to a quieter summer than usual. But by Q3, hiring came back with force, we recorded the highest job flow in 18 months, signalling a strong finish to the year and renewed momentum heading into 2026.

We saw a fast start to 2025, with job flow up 36% year-on-year in Q1.

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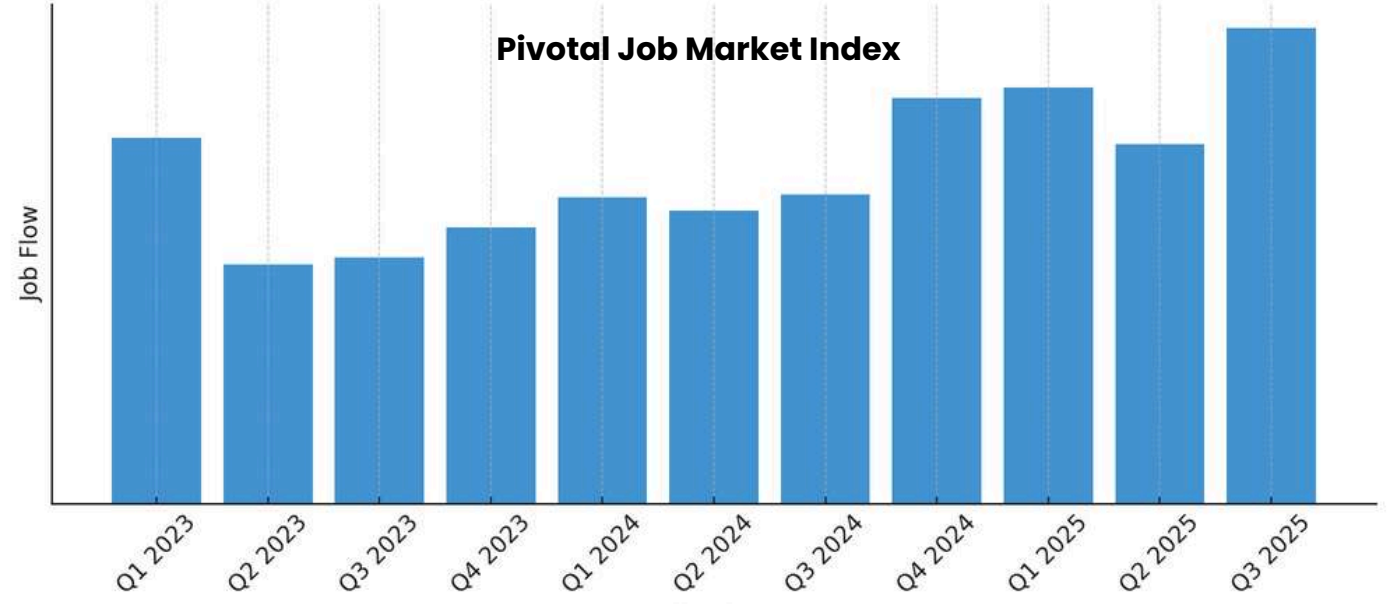


Survey Overview

Our Salary & Work Insights Survey ran for five weeks between September and October 2025, gathering responses from 943 professionals across Marketing, Sales, Media and Creative roles. Participants represented a mix of agencies, brands, AdTech, SaaS and media companies, providing a balanced snapshot of today's talent market. This year, we've gone deeper than ever before, segmenting responses by job type, experience level, gender and age to uncover a rich, data-driven view of how priorities and expectations differ across the industry.

GENDER



Female (54.30%)
Male (44.97%)
Non-binary/ Prefer not to say (0.72%)

COMPANY SIZE

Small 1-50 (25%)

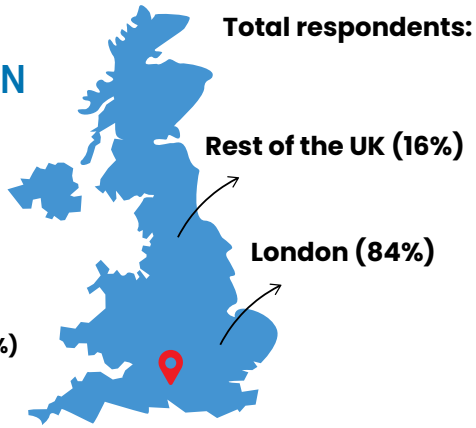
Medium 51-250 (24%)

Large 251-1000 (23%)

Very Large 1001+ (28%)

LOCATION

Total respondents: 943

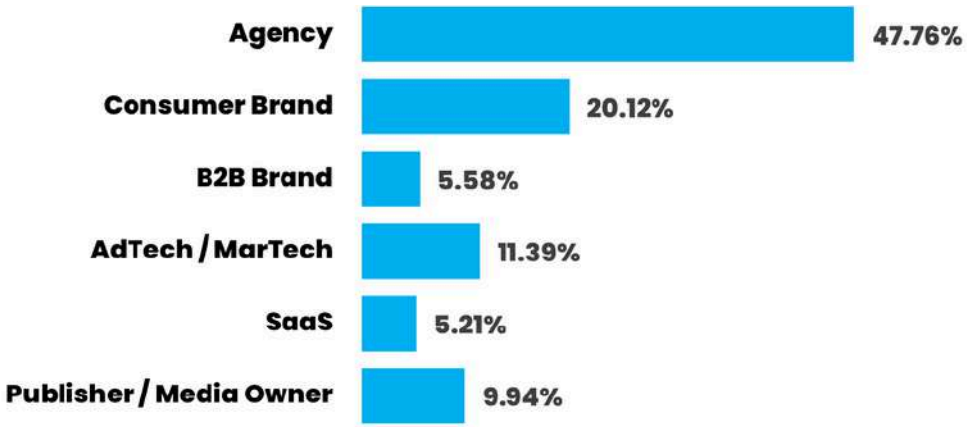


South East (6.55%)
South West (1.45%)
Midlands (2.42%)
North East (1.09%)
North West (2.91%)
Wales (0.73%)
Scotland (0.73%
Northern Ireland (0.12%)

Rest of the UK (16%)

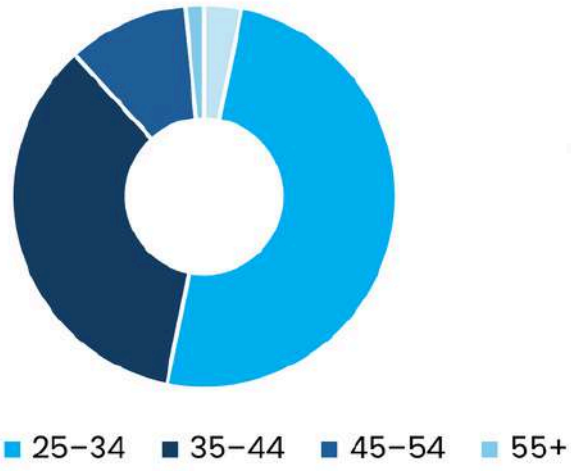
London (84%)

COMPANY TYPE



AGES

18-24 (3.15%)
25-34 (49.94%)
35-44 (35.15%)
45-54 (10.18%)
55+ (1.58%)



ETHNICITY

White (68.12%)
Asian / Asian British (13.58%)
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups (7.27%)
Black / Black British / Caribbean or African (4.48%)
Other ethnic group (2.78%)
Prefer not to say / Prefer to self-describe (3.75%)

Key Insights

The 2026 survey paints a picture of a market in motion and a workforce that knows what it wants. Two in three professionals plan to change jobs within the next year (62%), and more than a third are already looking (38.5%), momentum that keeps hiring brisk.

At the same time, sentiment isn't sour: just over half (50.5%) describe themselves as happy in their current role, while only one in four are unhappy. However, this is a drop in happy employees from 55% in last year's survey.

- **50.48% are happy in their current role**
- **18.69% are neither happy nor unhappy**
- **23.64% are unhappy**

(7.19% aren't currently in a job)

31%
of professionals had their in-office days increase in the last 12 months

72%
are concerned about becoming over reliant on AI at work

36%
of survey respondents have 10+ years industry experience

WHAT'S DRIVING MOVEMENT

Why move, then? The reasons are familiar and firm: salary and career progression (37.7%) top the push list, closely followed by toxic leadership (32.6%) and burnout (23.5%), powerful reminders that pay and management quality remain make-or-break. On the pull side, the winners are clear: competitive salary (83.7%), work-life balance (66%) and positive culture (54.2%).

And the context around work is shifting too: three in ten (30.9%) say office days increased over the past year, and while AI is now part of everyday workflows, 72.1% admit they're at least slightly concerned about over-reliance, a cue for companies to pair new tools with training and trust. Finally, this is a varied audience: 36.6% of our survey respondents have 10+ years of industry experience, giving a balanced perspective.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

The top five push and pull factors that respondents defined as important in their next role, and key in their decision to leave their last job:

PUSH

Pursuit of a higher salary: **37.70%**

Lack of career progression opportunities: **35.78%**

Toxic workplace or leadership: **32.59%**

Limited opportunities for skill development: **25.56%**

Experiencing burnout or exhaustion: **23.48%**

PULL

Salary: **83.71%**

Work-life balance: **65.97%**

Positive work environment and culture: **54.15%**

Opportunities for career development: **36.26%**

Convenient location: **28.75%**

JOB TENURE

The most common length of current stay according to our survey data:

30%	**Less than a year**
29%	**1 - 2 years**
14%	**2 - 3 years**
27%	**3+ years**

35%
of respondents didn't receive a pay rise in the last 12 months (improved 10% from 2024)

2025 vs 2026: What's Changed?

A year can make a big difference. Pay rises are more common, bonuses are stronger, and fewer professionals are juggling second jobs. But progress brings new tensions, AI anxiety is rising, and flexibility is under pressure. Here's how work, reward and sentiment have moved in twelve months through the lens of our 943 survey takers.

Pay

2025	2026
26% took on a second job in the past 12 months (for any reason)	**18%** took on a second job in the past 12 months (for any reason)
55% had a pay rise in the past 12 months	**65%** had a pay rise in the past 12 months
39% received a bonus in the past 12 months	**45%** received a bonus in the past 12 months

AI

2025	2026
25% said AI will positively impact their job in the next 5 years	**12%** said AI will positively impact their job in the next 5 years
30% use AI daily in the workplace	**49%** use AI daily in the workplace
17% never use AI in the workplace	**8%** never use AI in the workplace

Stayed the same

2025	2026
63% plan to switch jobs in the next 12 months	**62%** plan to switch jobs in the next 12 months
58% are happy with their current benefits	**56%** are happy with their current benefits

Benefits

Benefits remain one of the smartest ways to stand out in attraction and create staying power in retention. This year, just over half of professionals say they're happy with their current benefits (56.2%; 17.9% very happy, 38.3% somewhat), while 23.7% are unhappy and 20.1% feel neutral, clear headroom for employers who want to differentiate. When asked what would make the biggest impact aside from pay, the message is consistent: flexibility comes first (29.4%), followed by clearer progression/promotion opportunities (27.1%), then a more personalised benefits package (16.9%), increased annual leave (15.0%) and stronger learning & development (11.5%).

RECOGNITION

Looking under the surface, benefits satisfaction tracks recognition and financial momentum. Among those who said they're 'very happy' or 'happy' with their benefits, around 65% are also happy with salary, 53.5% received a bonus in the last year, and only 5% say their last pay rise was 3+ years ago. Out of those that said they're 'very unhappy' or 'unhappy' with their benefits, salary happiness also drops to 28%, bonus receipt falls to 37.5%, and 21% report no rise for 3+ years.

KEY LEARNINGS AND TAKEAWAYS

The 'what next' for employers is practical. Keep pay progression moving (and visible) and prioritise the non-pay wins people ask for most: flexible hours/location and clear, published progression frameworks. Personalisation is the emerging edge, particularly for dissatisfied groups, so modest choices (health/wellbeing add-ons, leave options, learning stipends) can punch above their cost, especially when paired with L&D focused on in-demand skills such as AI. The pattern is simple: when people feel seen and supported, benefits stop being cosmetic and start becoming a reason to join and stay.

ASIDE FROM PAY, WHICH BENEFIT WOULD HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT?

- **29.4%: Flexibility of hours / location**
- **27.1%: Clearer progression/promotion**
- **16.9%: Personalised package**
- **15%: More annual leave**
- **11.5%: Expanding L&D opportunities**

20%

of respondents state that a comprehensive benefits package is important in attracting them to their next role

ARE EMPLOYEES HAPPY WITH THEIR BENEFITS?

- **56% are happy in their current benefits**
- **20% are neither happy nor unhappy**
- **24% are unhappy**

***A slight (4%) increase in benefits unhappiness, from 20% in 2025**

Working Arrangements

Unsurprisingly, hybrid working continues to dominate, and the single most common pattern is three days in-office (38.7%), closely followed by two days (21.8%). That's just under six in ten professionals operating to a 2-3-day rhythm. Fully remote roles exist, but as a minority (15%), while fully office-based remains rare (6%), as is 4 days in-office (10%).

- **1 day in-office (6.34%)**
- **2 days in-office (21.76%)**
- **3 days in-office (38.71%)**
- **4 days in-office (9.64%)**
- **Fully remote (15.15%)**
- **Fully officed-based (6.47%)**
- **Digital nomad (1.24%)**
- **4-day work week (0.69%)**

60%
of professionals work two or three times a week in-office

MANDATED DAYS ARE CREEPING BACK

Around one-in-three professionals say their required office days increased this year (30.85%). Those with more office time show clear signs of strain: they're more likely to have taken a second job for financial reasons (15.2% vs 10.6%), and more likely to feel unhappy with their salary (40% vs 29%). The data suggests a simple truth, if employees are spending more time in the office, they expect to be compensated for it.

Employees with more in-office time are more likely to feel unhappy with their salary



31%
of professionals had their in-office days increase in the past 12 months

AI

Much like last year, AI has again dominated workplace discussion in 2025. Now a firm fixture in the toolkits of many professionals' - daily AI use has risen drastically in the past year, climbing from 30% to 49%. A further 25% say they use it at least weekly, and only 8% say they never use AI, down from 17% last year.

2024	2025
Yes, daily (29.93%)	Yes, daily (48.76%)
Yes, weekly (26.09%)	Yes, weekly (25.48%)
Yes rarely (27.42%)	Yes rarely (17.49%)
No (16.56%)	No (8.26%)

Despite the pace of adoption, access to formal training hasn't kept up. Over half (58%) say their company hasn't provided any AI training, and only 36% have received structured support. This gap has a direct impact on confidence and many feel they're using AI but guessing their way through it.

THE UPSIDE OF AI

Professionals overwhelmingly view AI as a net positive. Seven in ten (72%) say it's already improved productivity or efficiency, and nearly half say it's reduced delivery time. Two in five report that it's freed up time for higher-value or more strategic work, evidence that when implemented well, AI enhances rather than replaces human input. The quality of work also appears to benefit: 74% say AI has improved their output, with just 4% believing it has made things worse.

CAUTION AND CONCERNS

Enthusiasm, however, is tempered by realism. 72.13% of respondents say they are at least slightly concerned about becoming overly reliant on AI tools. This caution may explain the dip in long-term optimism. Whereas last year nearly one in four (25%) expected AI to impact their jobs very positively over the next 5 years, that's now fallen to 12%, with small but notable rises in negative sentiment. Professionals appear to be moving from excitement to evaluation – embracing the benefits, but wary of over-dependence and quality issues.

58%
of employees have not received formal AI training

72%
of professionals are concerned about becoming overly reliant on AI

KEY LEARNINGS AND TAKEAWAYS

The biggest lesson from this year's data: AI fluency matters, but so does guidance. Professionals are using AI more than ever, yet many still do so without structure, training or clear frameworks.

We've developed a series of AI Fluency Hiring Frameworks (covering Marketing, Growth, Creative, Sales and PR) to help businesses assess and benchmark AI capability when hiring. **Download all of them here.**

WHERE IS AI REALLY CAUSING CHANGE?



Improved productivity or efficiency (65.57%)



Reduced time to deliver work (48.14%)



Freed up time for more strategic or creative tasks (38.60%)



Prompted more internal AI training or upskilling (26.83%)



Reduced need for junior or entry-level hires (14.90%)

Generational Differences

From the survey data, our age breakouts show younger professionals chasing progression and flexibility, while more experienced talent is reporting stronger rewards and stability.

MID-CAREER: THE PRESSURE POINT

Professionals aged 35-44 saw the biggest rise in office mandated days (around 39% reporting more in-office days) while also leading AI integration, with over half using AI daily. They're adopting new tools while losing some flexibility, a combination that risks burnout and attrition. For employers: pair structure with autonomy. Clear progression and outcome-based expectations are vital levers to keep mid-career talent anchored.

EARNING AND RECOGNITION GROW WITH AGE

Unsurprisingly, financial momentum builds later in the career cycle. Bonus receipt climbs from around 41% among 25-34s to nearly 60% for 45–54s and 55+. Benefits happiness follows the same curve – highest among older professionals, lowest among early-career groups.

FLEXIBILITY VS. PERSONALISATION

Younger workers still see flexibility as the biggest wellbeing lever, while older professionals now favour personalised benefits. Among 25-44s, roughly a third say more flexible hours or location would most improve their wellbeing. But for 45-54s, that falls to 21%, while 29% now prefer more personalised packages. Flexibility attracts early-career talent, but personal choice retains experienced professionals.

GEN Z: EAGER BUT COST-PRESSURED

Gen Z (18–24) are entering the market under tighter conditions. They're more likely to be fully office-based and more likely to take on extra work for financial reasons (around 20%) than any other age group. They value stability, structure, and visible development opportunities – meaning early-career support, mentoring, and travel or expense assistance can go a long way to supporting them.



1 in 5
Gen Zs have taken on a second job for financial reasons

24%
of 35-44s citing burnout as reason for leaving their last role (up from 18% in 2024)

11%
more 25-34s received a pay rise in 2025 than in 2024

39%
of 45–54s saw office days increase: the highest of any cohort

Gender Differences

Last year, our 2025 survey revealed a clear gender pay gap in marketing, sales, media and creative: women earned 15.6% less than men, a £9,031 difference that we explored in our 2025 International Women's Day campaign (read more here).

This year's data tells a more nuanced story. The gap has narrowed, women now earn on average £7,100 less than men, a 9.8% pay gap, meaning they effectively stop earning on 25th of November. That's 20 days later than last year's Equal Pay Day.

WHY THE GAP HAS CLOSED

The closing gap can be partially attributed to who's represented. More women in this year's survey occupy senior positions, particularly at Head of and Senior Manager levels, while fewer sit in early-career roles. This upward tilt in experience helped lift the average female salary. At the same time, the male salary distribution flattened: fewer outliers in the £120k+ bracket than in 2025.

Combined with a broader, more balanced respondent mix across agency, brand and AdTech, this has compressed the extremes that previously widened the gap. Beneath those sample shifts, there are modest signs of real progress too, more women reported pay rises and bonuses than in 2025, perhaps pointing to a gradual closing of the recognition gap.

WHERE INEQUALITY REMAINS

Representation at the top is still uneven. Nearly half (49%) of male respondents in our survey hold senior roles (Head of, Director, C-suite), compared to one-third (33%) of women. The sharpest drop occurs between Manager and Head of, where female representation almost halves, evidencing a glass ceiling between middle management and senior roles. And at Director level, men still outnumber women by roughly 4:1. Further, 46.9% of men received a bonus last year compared with 43.4% of women, and men remain slightly more likely to report double-digit pay rises – small, compounding advantages that sustain long-term disparity.

WHY MEN AND WOMEN MOVE

While salary remains the top motivator for both groups, the surrounding priorities differ. Men lean slightly more on pay (84.8% vs 82.5%), while women place greater emphasis on work-life balance (66.8%) and a positive culture (56.5%). When looking back, the reasons for leaving jobs also diverge. Women are more likely to cite toxic leadership (36% vs 29%) and burnout (26% vs 20%). Interestingly, nearly one in five women (18.7%) say opportunities to build AI skills would attract them to a new role, compared with just 5.9% of men.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

The gender pay gap may have narrowed, but it has far from closed. The data shows women are still under-represented in the highest-earning, highest-influence roles. The challenge for 2026 and beyond is to sustain this momentum, not just by hiring women into senior positions, but by ensuring they stay there, progress, and are rewarded equitably for doing so.

Gender pay gap: 9.8% (£7,100): women effectively work 'unpaid' from 25 November

49%
of male respondents in our survey hold senior roles

33%
of female respondents in our survey hold senior roles

Retention

62.1% of professionals plan to switch jobs within the next 12 months, and 38.5% are already looking. Only one in five say they have no plans to leave, a reminder that loyalty is no longer the norm but something employers must continually earn.

THE HAPPINESS DIVIDE

Job happiness is now the clearest indicator of flight risk. Among professionals happy in their roles, only 15.5% are job-hunting, and 34.8% have no plans to move. Among unhappy professionals, those numbers flip: 71.6% are actively searching, and just 1.4% plan to stay. The difference lies in recognition. Happy employees are far more likely to have had a recent or meaningful pay rise, 19.8% received a 10%+ increase (vs 8.2% of unhappy respondents) and more frequent reviews, with 79% reporting a raise within the last two years.

WHY PEOPLE MOVE

The same friction points persist year-on-year: salary (36%), career progression (36%), and toxic leadership (33%) remain the top reasons for leaving, followed by burnout (26%). When asked what would most improve their work life beyond pay, professionals were split evenly between more flexibility (29.9%) and clearer progression (29.9%), proving that autonomy and advancement weigh as heavily as salary. Salary may open the door, but progression, flexibility and recognition keep people around.

HAPPINESS IS KEY



Money matters: Happy employees were twice as likely to have received a 10%+ pay rise in the past year.



Only 46% of professionals looking to leave are happy with their benefits; 30% are unhappy.



Only 16% of happy professionals are job-hunting vs 72% of workers who are unhappy.

ARE EMPLOYEES HAPPY WITH THEIR SALARY?

- **53% are happy with their current salary**
- **14% are neither happy nor unhappy**
- **33% are unhappy**

48%

of team managers cited retention as the biggest challenge for 2026

Hiring and Planning

Over the past year, companies have modernised their tech stacks but tightened almost everything else. Nearly four in ten professionals (39%) say tools and technology have improved, yet headcount fell for 30% of teams and budgets for 24%. Learning and development has largely been on hold (55% unchanged), and nearly a third of respondents say leadership support declined, with only 18% reporting an increase. Together, it suggests a shift toward efficiency - more tools, fewer people - but also highlights the risk of investing in systems without the enablement or manager time to make them work.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026

Looking ahead, the focus for leaders is clear: maintaining capability in leaner conditions. Retention (48%), meeting salary expectations (43%), and budget management (39%) top the list of challenges, while attracting new talent (21%) remains important but less urgent than keeping high performers engaged. Financial caution continues to influence hiring pace, and economic uncertainty (34%) still shapes planning cycles. Integrating AI tools (25%) now outranks AI disruption (17%), showing that AI has shifted from hype to implementation. Meanwhile, flexible and hybrid working is largely considered resolved, with just 17% calling it a challenge, now part of the baseline rather than a benefit.

THE SNAPSHOT

Taken together, the data reflects a market focused on optimisation over expansion. Teams are operating with smaller budgets and flatter L&D investment, but with stronger technology at their disposal. The challenge is converting that investment into sustained productivity and engagement. Nearly 30% of professionals say managerial support has decreased, a subtle but significant risk in a year when retention pressure and workload intensity are rising.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

2026 will reward employers who enable their teams. The companies that turn new tools into capability through structured training, clear communication and visible progression, will build loyalty and performance in equal measure. Hiring may be measured, but it's still mission-critical; getting the right people in early, and setting them up to succeed, will define the winners of 2026.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN 2026

Survey respondents selected up to 5 answers

- Retaining existing staff (48.05%)
- Meeting salary expectations (43.46%)
- Budget contraints / cost-cutting (39.22%)
- Navigating economic uncertainty (34.30%)
- Bridging skills gaps within the team (22.41%)
- Attracting new talent (20.54%)
- AI disruption (17.49%)
- Expanding into new markets (17.32%)
- Supporting employee wellbeing (16.81%)
- Offering flexible working (16.64%)
- Strengthening DE&I (6.96%)

*Other answer (8.83%)

Only **7%** see 'strengthening DE&I' as a priority challenge in 2026

HIRING / GROWTH PLANS IN 2026?

YES (42%)

NO 34%)

*24% don't have visibility over hiring decisions

Agency

Agency professionals remain the most move-ready group in our dataset, 42% are actively job-hunting, and just 17% have no plans to leave. This reflects a wider tension between ambition and recognition: nearly four in ten report no salary change in the past year, and three-quarters received no bonus at all. When recognition stalls, so does retention. And, for the first time, career progression has overtaken salary as a top reason for leaving (both at 37%).

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Agency teams are doing more with less. While 41% say access to tools and technology has improved, headcount and budgets are more likely to have fallen than grown. The result: leaner teams, faster delivery, and more pressure on retention. AI adoption is now mainstream in agencies, 70% use it weekly or daily, and 72% say it has improved quality. But its ripple effects are starting to show: 12% report it has reduced the need for junior hires, and the same share say roles have already been merged or lost due to automation.

AGENCY HIRING OUTLOOK

Despite these pressures, agencies remain growth-minded: 43% plan to hire in the next 12 months. Their top challenges mirror the talent mood, retention (53%) and meeting salary expectations (52%) rank above all else. Agencies that can offer clarity on progression, flexible working, and visible recognition will have the strongest hiring pull.

Agency - Paid Media (PPC & Paid Social)

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Account Executive	0.5 - 1.5	£28k - £33k	£250
Senior Account Executive	1.5 - 3	£33k - £35k	£250 - £275
Account Manager	3 - 4	£40k - £45k	£300 - £350
Senior Account Manager	4 - 5	£45k - £52k	£360 - £400
Account Director	5 - 6	£52k - £60k	£400 - £450
Senior Account Director	6 - 8	£60k - £70k	£450 - £500
Business Director	8+	£70k - £85k	£500+

42%

of Agency professionals are actively job hunting

Agency - SEO / Programmatic

With salary satisfaction still mixed across the industry, clear benchmarking has never been more important. In competitive areas like SEO and Programmatic, where results are measurable and mobility is high, businesses that link reward to impact and provide clarity on progression will be best placed to retain and motivate top performers.

Agency - SEO

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
SEO Executive	0.5 - 1.5	£28k - £35k	£250 - £300
Senior SEO Executive	1.5 - 3	£35k - £45k	£300 - £350
SEO Manager	3 - 4	£45k - £55k	£340 - £400
Senior SEO Manager	4 - 5	£55k - £65k	£400 - £430
SEO Director	5 - 6	£55k - £65k	£430 - £475
Senior SEO Director	6 - 8	£65k - £75k	£475 - £500
Head of SEO	8+	£75k+	£500+

Agency - Programmatic

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Account Executive	0.5 - 1.5	£28k - £33k	£250 - £300
Senior Account Executive	1.5 - 3	£33k - £40k	£300 - £350
Account Manager	3 - 4	£40k - £50k	£375 - £400
Senior Account Manager	4 - 5	£50k - £58k	£400 - £430
Account Director	5 - 6	£52k - £65k	£435 - £475
Senior Account Director	6 - 8	£65k - £75k	£475 - £520
Business Director	8+	£75k - £90k	£550+

Agency - Media Planning

Media planners that completed our survey are experienced and mobile. Close to 7 in 10 say they're likely to move within 12 months, and only 46% say they're happy in their current role. Pay is a big part of that story: fewer than half (48.6%) are satisfied with salary, 40% saw no increase in the last year, and just 27% received a bonus - most of those at only 1-10%.

RESOURCING GAP

What makes this stand out is the backdrop: 43% said headcount in their team went down this year and 35% said budgets were cut, while expectations stayed high. That's why culture and workload show up alongside salary as reasons for leaving (toxic leadership 36.5%, burnout 27%). The message from planners is clear — if you're going to bring people back into the office more often (37.5% said their in-office days were increased), you have to resource them properly.

Planning and Buying (Comms)

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Account Executive	0 - 1.5	£25k - £30k	£250 - £300
Senior Account Executive / Planner	1 - 3	£32k - £38k	£300 - £325
Account Manager	3 - 5	£40k - £45k	£350 - £400
Account Director	6+	£55k	£375 - £400
Business Director	8+	£75k	£425 - £450
Client Partner	10+	£100k+	£450 - £500
Managing Partner	12+	£110k+	

Planning and Buying (Digital)

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Digital Account Executive	0 - 1.5	£25k - £30k	£250
Senior Digital Account Executive	1.5 - 3	£32k - £38k	£250 - £300
Digital Account Manager	3 - 5	£40k - £45k	£300 - £350
Digital Account Director	6+	£55k	£350 - £450
Digital Business Director	8+	£75k	£450 - £470
Head of Display / Digital	10+	£90k+	£500+

Planning & Buying (AV)

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
AV Account Executive	0 - 1.5	£25k - £33k	£250 - £300
AV Senior Account Executive	1.5 - 3	£35k - £38k	£300 - £325
AV Account Manager	3 - 4	£40k - £45k	£350 - £400
AV Account Director	5+	£55k - £60k	£375 - £400
AV Business Director	7+	£70k+	£425 - £450
Head of AV	10+	£100k+	£500 - £550

Media Strategy

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Strategy Manager	5+	£45k - £50k	£350 - £400
Senior Strategist	7+	£50k - £60k	£375 - £425
Strategy Director	8+	£60k+	£425 - £475
Head of Strategy	10+	£90k+	£450 - £500

Creative

Half of creatives who completed our survey are fully remote (50%), and another 40% work hybrid patterns (1-3 days or flexible), with only a tiny minority fully office based. That's a noticeably more flexible picture than in media or performance, and it's a continuation of what we saw in 2025, creative work is trusted to be done anywhere, as long as it ships.

THE FUTURE GAP

Because seniors and heads dominate, there's a future gap: few juniors are coming through, yet AI is already being used to speed delivery and take the first pass off teams (56% say AI has improved productivity or efficiency). If that continues, more of the entry-level work will be automated or pushed to freelancers, which could make building in-house junior capability harder.

56%
of creatives said AI has improved their productivity or efficiency

Creative

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Video Editor	2 - 6	£30k - £55k	£300 - £450
Videographer	2 - 6	£25k - £55k	£350 - £500
Art Directors	3 - 8	£30k - £80k	£350 - £550
Creative Copywriters	2 - 7	£30k - £70k	£300 - £450
Creative Team	4 - 8	£45k - £80k	£400 - £550
Design Director	6 - 8	£60k - £80k	£400 - £500
Creative Director	7 - 10+	£70k - £100k	£500 - £600
Executive Creative Director	10+	£100k - £180k	£500 - £800

Design

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Junior Designer	0 - 2	£25k - £30k	
Midweight Designer	2 - 5	£30k - £45k	£300 - £380
Senior Designer	4 - 6	£45k - £65k	£300 - £400
3D Designer	3 - 8	£40k - £70k	£350 - £500
Motion Graphics Designer	3 - 8	£40k - £80k	£350 - £500

Digital Design

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Junior Digital Designer	1 - 3	£25k - £35k	
Midweight Digital Designer	3 - 6	£35k - £45k	£300 - £400
Senior Digital Designer	6 - 8	£45k - £65k	£400 - £500

Studio

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Artworkers	3 - 8	£30k - £55k	£300 - £400
Presentation Designer	3 - 8	£35k - £70k	£370 - £500

PR

PR and Communications professionals remain among the most change-ready in the market. Nearly 77% expect to move roles within a year – up from 67% in 2025 – reflecting an industry where ambition runs high but stability often lags behind. Satisfaction levels are better than expected, though: 58% are happy in their roles and 73% satisfied with pay, showing that movement is less about dissatisfaction and more about progression, recognition, and leadership.

CONFIDENCE VS. STRAIN

While pay satisfaction is strong, resourcing strain tells another story. Over a third of PR professionals saw budget cuts (28%), headcount reductions (32%), and declining leadership support (36%) over the past year. Yet more than half report improved tools and technology, underscoring a sector modernising its output faster than its management culture. The result is a delicate balance between optimism and exhaustion - especially in mid-senior roles shouldering delivery and strategy.

Only

27%

of PR workers have received formal AI training

PR - Agency

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Account Executive	0 - 2	£25k - £29k	
Senior Account Executive	2 - 3	£30k - £34k	
Account Manager	3 - 4	£35k - £43k	£300 - £340
Senior Account Manager	4 - 6	£44k - £50k	£330 - £375
Account Director	5 - 7	£50k - £60k	£350 - £425
Senior Account Director	7 - 9	£60k - £67k	£425 - £475
Associate Director	8+	£60k - £80k	£475 – £550
Director	9/10+	£80k+	£550+

PR - In-House

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Press Officer / Comms Assistant	1 - 2	£25k - £32k	
Senior Press Officer	3 - 4	£32k - £38k	
PR / Communications Manager	4 - 6	£40k - £54k	£300 - £425
Senior PR / Communications Manager	6 - 8	£54k - £70k	£400 - £475
PR Director	8 - 12	£70k - £85k	£450 - £550
Head of Communications	12+	£85k+	£550+

Creative Strategy & Video for Performance Media

Paid-social success now hinges on constant creative iteration. Creative Strategists sit at the intersection of storytelling and performance data, managing the full creative pipeline for platforms like Meta, TikTok and UGC-style ads. They research hooks, write scripts and briefs, engage creators and use live metrics to improve ads, all without losing brand integrity.

In parallel, the rise of micro-video, short-form ads and modular content means Video Editors for Performance Media are no longer just back-end designers. They are specialists who understand paid channel formats, optimise content for ad performance, work rapidly across hooks and formats, and collaborate with media buyers to refine visuals in real-time.

WHAT THEY DO

Creative Strategists:

- Ideate & brief – analyse consumer trends and competitor ads, craft scripts/concepts and brief designers and UGC creators
- Test & optimise – launch ads, monitor hook/hold rates and conversion metrics, then iterate copy and visuals to improve results
- Coordinate production - manage freelancers and internal teams, ensure assets hit deadlines and brand standards

Video Editors for Performance Media:

- Format & optimise – create short form ad assets (6–15 sec hooks, 30 sec variants), adapt across channels (feed, story, Reels)
- Performance first editing – understand CTR, view through, completion rate and feed that insight into revision loops
- Rapid delivery – deliver 10+ versions weekly, work across creative, performance and media stakeholders, maintain consistent brand visual identity

Creative Strategist

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Entry / Junior	1 - 2	£30k - £40k
Mid-level	2 - 4	£40k - £60k
Senior	4 - 8	£55k - £75k
Head / Lead	8+	£70k+

Video Editor for Performance Media

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior Video Editor	1 - 2	£28k - £35k
Video Editor (Performance Focus)	3 - 5	£40k - £55k
Senior Performance Video Editor	5+	£55k - £70k
Creative Lead / Video Lead	6 - 10+	£70k - £85k+

Marketing & Growth

Building an in-house marketing or growth team today means navigating rapid shifts in capability, culture, and technology. Our survey data revealed very different patterns between B2C and B2B marketers.

B2C MARKETER INSIGHTS

Consumer-brand teams show clear pay momentum and stronger reward mechanisms: only 19.7% saw no salary change last year, while 17.2% enjoyed a rise above 10%. Almost half (48.3%) received a bonus, and nearly half of those paid earned more than 10% of their salary. AI adoption is improving productivity and speed rather than replacing roles: 66% report quality gains, and 50% say AI has shortened delivery times, yet just 4.6% saw team restructuring. The pattern is one of stability through speed, established teams getting faster, not smaller.

B2B MARKETER INSIGHTS

By contrast, B2B brand marketers report greater financial strain and structural change. Nearly 47% had no pay rise last year, and only 34% received a bonus. B2B teams are also where AI is most visibly changing the organisation: 37% received internal AI training, 23% reduced external agency reliance, and 17% saw job losses in their company because of AI. This points to a shift towards insourcing and automation, driven by cost control but also by confidence in AI-led capability.

60%
of Consumer Brand marketers have been less than 2 years in their current roles

3 in 4
B2B marketers are planning on switching roles within 12 months

Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Marketing Executive	1 - 3	£25k - £40k	£250 - £300
Marketing Manager	3 - 5	£40k - £60k	£350 - £375
Senior Marketing Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £80k	£400 - £450
Head of Marketing	8 - 12	£80k - £110k	£500 - £600
Director / VP of Marketing	10 - 15	£90k - £130k	£700 - £900
CMO	15+	£140k - £220k	£750 - £1000

Growth Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Growth Marketing Executive	1 - 3	£30k - £45k	£250 - £300
Growth Marketing Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £70k	£350 - £375
Growth Marketing Senior Manager	5 - 8	£70k - £90k	£400 - £450
Head of Growth Marketing	8 - 12	£90k - £120k	£450 - £550
Director / VP of Marketing	10 - 15	£120k - £180k	£500 - £600
CMO	15+	£160k - £250k	£650 - £1000

Performance Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Performance Marketing Executive	1 - 3	£25k - £50k	£250 - £300
Performance Marketing Manager	3 - 5	£50k - £65k	£350 - £375
Senior Performance Marketing Manager	5 - 7	£65k - £80k	£400 - £450
Head of Performance Marketing	7 - 10	£80k - £120k	£500 - £600
Director of Performance Marketing	10+	£120k+	£650 - £1000

CRM & Retention

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
CRM Executive	1 - 3	£30k - £45k	£250 - £300
CRM Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £55k	£350 - £375
Senior CRM Manager	5 - 7	£55k - £65k	£400 - £450
Head of CRM	7 - 10	£65k - £100k	£500 - £600
CRM Director	10+	£100k+	£700 - £900

SEO & Organic

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
SEO Executive	1 - 2	£30k - £40k	£250 - £300
SEO Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k	£350 - £400
Senior SEO Manager	5 - 7	£60k - £80k	£400 - £450
Head of SEO	7 - 10	£80k - £100k	£500 - £600
SEO Director	10+	£100k - £120k+	£700 - £900

Brand Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day Rate All Inclusive
Brand Manager	3 - 5	£40k - £60k	£250 - £300
Senior Brand Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £85k	£350 - £375
Head of Brand	8 - 12	£80k - £110k	£400 - £450
Director of Brand Marketing	10 - 15	£110k - £140k	£500 - £600
VP of Brand Marketing	12 - 15+	£140k - £170k	£650 - £1000
Chief Brand Officer (CBO)	15+	£160k - £220k+	£650 - £1000

Content Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Content Marketing Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £70k
Senior Content Marketing Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £90k
Head of Content Marketing	8 - 12	£80k - £110k
Director of Content Marketing	10 - 15	£100k - £140k
VP of Content Marketing	12 - 15	£120k - £150k+

Product Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Product Marketing Manager	3 - 5	£60k - £80k
Senior Product Marketing Manager	5 - 8	£80k - £100k
Director of Product Marketing	8 - 12	£100k - £150k
VP Product Marketing	12 - 15+	£150k+

Social Media

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Day rate All inclusive
Social Media Executive	0 - 2	£22k - £30k	£250 - £300
Social Media Manager	2 - 5	£28k - £45k	£300 - £350
Senior Social Media Manager / Lead	5 - 8	£45k - £60k+	£350 - £400
Head of Social Media	8 - 12+	£60k+	£400 - £500
Influencer Manager	2 - 6	£31k - £48k	£300 - £380
Content Creator (In-house)	1 - 4	£26k - £44k	£300 - £350

eCommerce

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
eCommerce Manager	3 - 5	£50k - £70k
Senior eCommerce Manager	5 - 8	£70k - £90k
Head of eCommerce	8 - 12	£90k - £120k
Director of eCommerce	10 - 15	£110k - £140k
Chief Digital Officer (CDO) / Chief eCommerce Officer (CEO)	15+	£160k - £250k+

Marketing Analytics / Data

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Marketing Data Analyst / Junior Marketing Analysteting Data	1 - 3	£30k - £40k
Marketing Analyst	3 - 5	£40k - £60k
Senior Marketing Analyst	5 - 8	£60k - £80k
Head of Marketing Analytics	8 - 12	£80k - £110k
Director of Marketing Analytics	10 - 15	£100k - £130k
Chief Data Officer (CDO)	15+	£100k - £180k

B2B Content Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead / Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

B2B Demand Generation

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead/Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

B2B Digital Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead / Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

B2B Customer Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead / Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

B2B Product Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead / Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

B2B Brand Marketing

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead / Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

B2B Data & Analytics

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary
Junior / Entry-Level	0 - 2	£25k - £35k
Specialist / Individual Contributor	2 - 4	£35k - £45k
Team Lead / Manager	3 - 5	£45k - £60k
Mid-Level Manager	5 - 8	£60k - £75k
Senior Manager	8 - 12	£75k - £90k
Head of [Function]	10 - 15	£90k - £110k
Director	12+	£110k - £140k

AdTech / MarTech / SaaS

For AdTech and MarTech professionals, 2026 feels steadier, but not static. Movement remains high, with 54% planning to change jobs within a year, yet dissatisfaction has softened compared to 2025. Half describe themselves as happy in their roles, and 57% are content with their pay. It's a market that values progress and recognition over quick jumps.

BONUSES AND PAY VISIBILITY IMPROVE

Bonuses are commonplace: 71% of respondents received one in the past year, and over a quarter report payouts worth 11–20% of their base salary - a sharp rise on last year's figures. That aligns with the return of confidence at senior level and renewed focus on performance-linked pay. Benefits satisfaction is also strong (64% happy), with flexibility, clearer progression and personalised perks topping the improvement wish list.

BUDGETS, HEADCOUNT AND THE YEAR AHEAD

The structural picture is more nuanced. While 35% report improved tools and tech and 30% saw headcount growth, 25% faced budget cuts and 26% saw declining leadership support. This imbalance hints at teams being equipped to deliver more, but not always backed at the top. Even so, 45% of respondents say their company is hiring or expanding in 2026, suggesting confidence in long-term growth despite short-term caution.

WHAT COMPANIES ARE FOCUSED ON

Retention and salary expectations top the challenge list (48% and 34%), followed by budget constraints and economic uncertainty. Interestingly, only 14% cite attracting talent as a major concern, proof that the challenge in AdTech isn't finding candidates, but keeping the right ones engaged. That said, identifying and securing the right specialist talent remains competitive, and where specialist support still makes a measurable difference.



48%
of AdTech leaders say retention is their top challenge

71%
of surveyed AdTech professionals received a bonus in the past 12 months

AdTech Salaries

AdTech and Programmatic Sales

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Sales Executive	1 - 2	£30k - £40k	50 - 60%
Sales Manager	2 - 5	£40k - £60k	50 - 60%
Senior Sales Manager	4 - 7	£60k - £70k	50 - 60%
Account Director	7 - 10	£70k - £85k	50 - 60%
Head of / Sales Director	10+	£100k - £150k	50 - 60%
Managing Director / Country Manager	15+	£150k - £250k	50 - 60%

Digital Media Sales

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Sales Executive	1 - 2	£28k - £35k	30 - 40%
Sales Manager	2 - 5	£35k - £50k	30 - 40%
Senior Sales Manager	4 - 7	£50k - £65k	30 - 40%
Account Director	7 - 10	£65k - £80k	30 - 40%
Head of / Sales Director	10+	£90k - £110k	30 - 40%
Managing Director/ Country Manager	15+	£120k - £175k	30 - 40%

Publisher Sales

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Publisher Development Executive	1 - 2	£32k - £40k	40 - 50%
Publisher Development Manager	2 - 5	£40k - £60k	40 - 50%
Senior Publisher Development Manager	4 - 7	£60k - £75k	40 - 50%
Publisher Development Director	7 - 10	£75k - £90k	40 - 50%
Head of Publisher Development	10+	£90k - £120k	40 - 50%

Mid-Market Sales - SaaS

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Sales Development Representative (SDR)	1 - 2	£35k - £40k	30 - 50%
Account Executive	3 - 8	£65k - £85k	100%
VP Sales	10+	£125k - £175k	70 - 100%

Enterprise Sales - SaaS

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Sales Development Representative (SDR)	1 - 2	£35k - £40k	30 - 50%
Account Executive	3 - 8	£85k - £120k	100%
VP Sales	10+	£140k - £200k	70 - 100%

AdTech Salaries

Customer Success - Agencies/Advertisers

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Customer Success Executive	1 - 2	£30k - £45k	20 - 30%
Customer Success Manager	2 - 5	£50k - £65k	20 - 30%
Senior Customer Success Manager	4 - 7	£65k - £80k	20 - 30%
Customer Success Director	7 - 10	£80k - £110k	20 - 30%
VP Customer Success	10+	£110k - £150k	20 - 30%

Account Management - Publishers

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Publisher Account Executive	1 - 2	£30k - £37k	20 - 30%
Publisher Account Manager	2 - 5	£35k - £45k	20 - 30%
Senior Publisher Account Manager	4 - 7	£45k - £60k	20 - 30%
Account Director	7 - 10	£60k - £75k	20 - 30%
Head of Publisher Management	10+	£75k - £100k	20 - 30%

Ad Operations

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Ad Operations Executive	1 - 2	£28k - £35k	10 - 15%
Ad Operations Manager	2 - 5	£35k - £50k	10 - 15%
Senior Ad Operations Manager	4 - 7	£50k - £70k	10 - 15%
Head of Ad Operations	7 - 10	£70k - £80k	10 - 15%
Ad Operations Director	10+	£80k - £100k	10 - 15%

Programmatic Trading

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Programmatic Executive	1 - 2	£30k - £35k	10 - 25%
Senior Programmatic Executive	2 - 5	£35k - £45k	10 - 25%
Programmatic Manager	4 - 7	£45k - £60k	10 - 25%
Programmatic Lead	7 - 10	£60k - £80k	10 - 25%
Programmatic Director	10+	£80k - £100k	10 - 25%

Technical Account Management

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Technical Account Manager	2 - 5	£50k - £70k	15 - 20%
Senior Technical Account Manager	5 - 8	£70k - £90k	15 - 20%
Head of Technical Account Management	10+	£90k - £110k	15 - 20%

Pre-Sales/Solutions Engineering

Job Title	Years of Exp.	Salary	Bonus
Solutions Consultant	4 - 7	£65k - £85k	20 - 30%
Senior Solutions Consultant	7 - 10	£85k - £100k	20 - 30%
Head of Solutions / Pre-Sales	10+	£110k - £150k	20 - 30%

Ready to Build What's Next?

Our Salary & Work Insights Guide 2026 highlights where talent is moving, what professionals value most, and how the smartest teams are adapting.

Now, see how we help businesses like yours turn these insights into action.

Turn Insights into Impact

Growth looks different for every business, so does the way you hire.

We design talent partnerships that flex with you: from one key hire to full team builds, from embedded projects to exec search.

Whether you're scaling fast, hiring smarter, or simply planning ahead, we help you find the right people and the right way to hire them.

See how we've helped teams like yours grow Case studies

Talk to our team: Let's discuss how we can help you attract, hire, and retain top Marketing, Sales, Media, and Creative talent for 2026 and beyond.

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