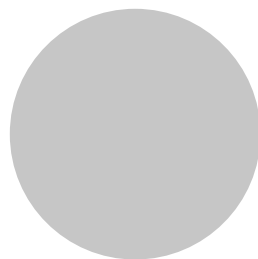
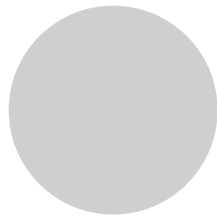


# HR 20.21

Challenges and trends within the EEMENA HR landscape



THE ADECCO GROUP



# Contents



3 Editor's note



4 Executive summary

5 The bigger picture

6 HR 20.21: Objectives & study sample

7 Recruitment activities



10 Productivity of the recruitment process

14 Skills & background of the candidates



# Editor's note

Dear readers,

We stand before a once in a lifetime opportunity to redefine the way we work. If we have learned anything from the past, it is that knowledge is fundamental in times of crisis. The modern organisation is defined by its capacity to better understand the environment it is within and around it. Reading dashboards and running numbers is mundane for many decision makers. Understanding causes and spotting potential opportunities is something else.

Knowing what to do with the information surrounding us has proven to be a cornerstone for most organisations in the past twelve months. I believe that at The Adecco Group we've made the best out of all the information we've processed and laid the pillars needed to build a better future for the world of work.

The report standing in front of us is a tribute to one of those pillars: the HR professionals.

The way we look at the human resources departments today is vastly different than it was in the past. The role of HR was put to the test last year through the global health pandemic and alongside management, it was HR providing guidance and most importantly trust in organisations. As remarkable as that may be this is not the scope of this report. Our focus in the HR 20.21 report is to find out how HR delivers results daily, what are the challenges they face, and what prospects they see for the future.

We thank all the contributors for their support in shaping up the conclusions, and hope that this material will be useful for all when thinking about the future of work.

Enjoy your reading.

Yours sincerely,

Angelo Lo Vecchio

SVP Adecco and Head of Eastern Europe, Middle East, & North Africa at Adecco

# Executive summary

The economic predictions for recovery after the pandemic are very optimistic. Countries like Romania, Turkey, and Serbia are among the countries with the highest economic turnover forecasted by the end of 2021. This climate of optimism is visible in recruitment trends and the strategic hiring plans of many companies in EEMENA. Boosted by the learnings from the pandemic, companies and HR departments are more mindful towards topics like increase of inequality, skills mismatch, wellbeing of employees etc.

As global leaders in HR solutions we find it our duty to shed light on the different perceptions and challenges HR professionals are experiencing in the current climate. We are not alone in this effort. Governments, business leaders, and workers are aiming to better understand each other's need and concerns with the common purpose to develop inclusive public policies and up to date human-centric solutions.

HR 20.21 is thought to be a multi-annual research effort that will map out the HR landscape of the Eastern Europe, Middle East, and North Africa regions (Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates). For the current version we surveyed over 400 HR professionals from all industries that cover multiple roles within HR departments. This report explores the findings of our survey in greater depth, while integrating explanations provided by Adecco's most experienced consultants.

The report's key findings found that:



**Recruiters are interested firstly by the attitude and values displayed by the candidates.** HR professionals are paying special attention to the way the candidates display values during interviews and the way they are compatible with the company's corporate values.



**A recruiter must interview 5 candidates on average to fill in one position.** This number varies profoundly depending on industry, volume of candidates, and level of experience of the candidates.



**The average filling time for closing an opened position is 1 month.** The period attributed to the recruitment process can vary depending on the company procedures, complexity of the opened positions, and the compensations and benefits package.



**The main reason an employee changes jobs is the lack of career path visibility and possibility of promotion.** This insight challenges the perception that employees leave companies due to the bad relationships with managers.

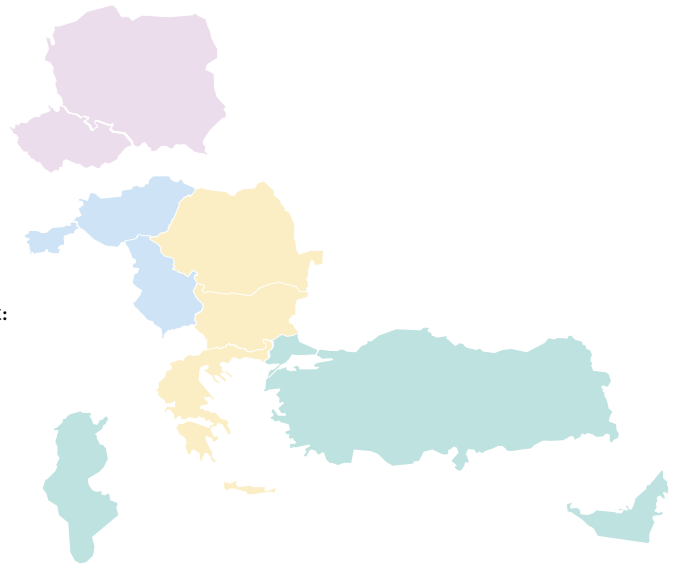


**The most critically needed skills in difficult to close positions are emotional intelligence, complex problem-solving, analytical thinking, and innovation.** The hardest to close positions for recruiters are coming from IT, technical industries, and finance.

# The bigger picture

Eastern Europe, Middle East, and North Africa (EEMENA) is one of the most dynamic and diverse regions in the world. With a total population of over 221 million people and a geographical surface area of 2 million km<sup>2</sup>, EEMENA is comparable with France, Germany, Italy, and Spain combined (CW Europe), or Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia combined (SE Asia). Within the Adecco Group the EEMENA countries are clustered together in the following format:

- Poland and the Czech Republic
- Slovenia, Serbia, and Hungary
- Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania
- Turkey, UAE, and Tunisia



Among the countries, which precede the Industrial Revolution, are facilitating cross-border cooperation. The region is diverse in terms of geography and competitiveness. Most of the Eastern European countries compete amongst themselves for foreign investments and are simultaneously trading partners within the European Union. The United Arab Emirates and the Czech Republic are leading the way, and in many ways outperform most of the other high-income countries in the region.

Transport infrastructure is generally good but intra-region connectivity still needs improvement (especially for fluvial, rail, and road transport). All countries thrive on stable macroeconomic conditions, even though good financing initiatives are still driven by the private sector.

During the first half of 2021 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published the economic rebound projections by the end of the year.

Most of the EEMENA countries have excellent growth prospects after the economic slowdown caused by the global health pandemic. Countries like Romania, Turkey, and Serbia are leading the European ranking with higher growth forecasts than large Western European countries. This optimism is highlighted by consumer behaviours and the HR development plans of the companies in these regions.

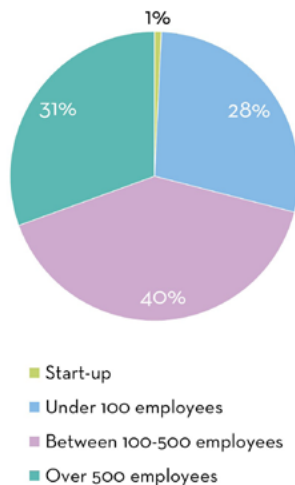


# HR 20.21. Objectives & study sample

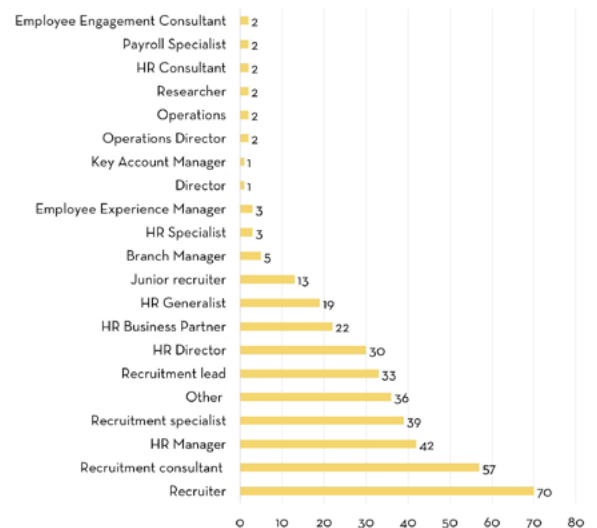
The aim of this report is to find out more about how HR professionals are coping with day-to-day activities. The method used was 28 survey questions administered in the timeframe between May-July 2021 to over 400 HR professionals across the EEMENA countries. The survey was split in three sections.

One was treating **recruitment activities** of HR professionals, the second one **productivity** in the recruitment activities, and the third was the **skills and background of the candidates**. The sampled population had the following structure:

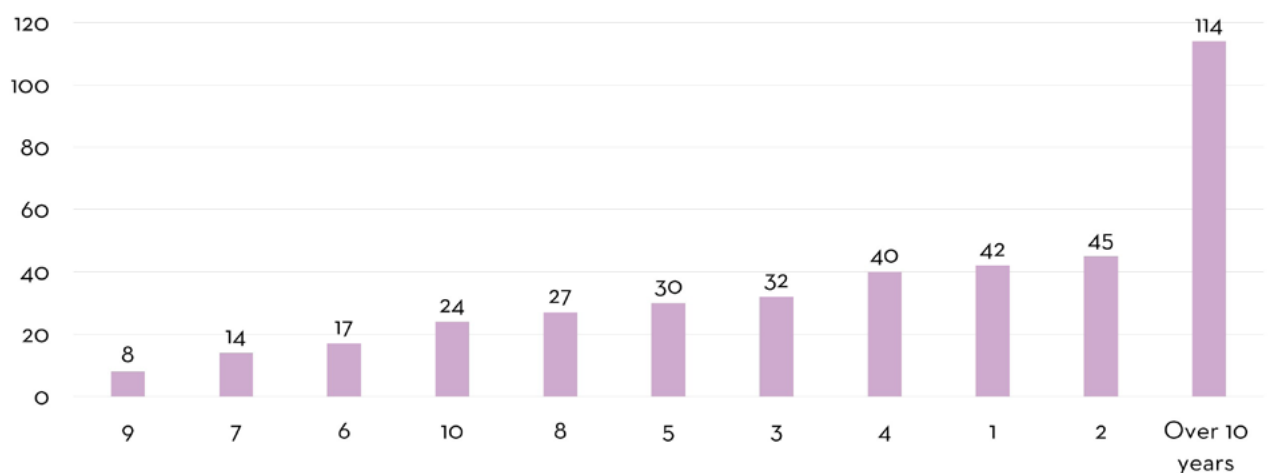
## What is the size of your company?



## What is your job title?



## How many years of experience do you have?

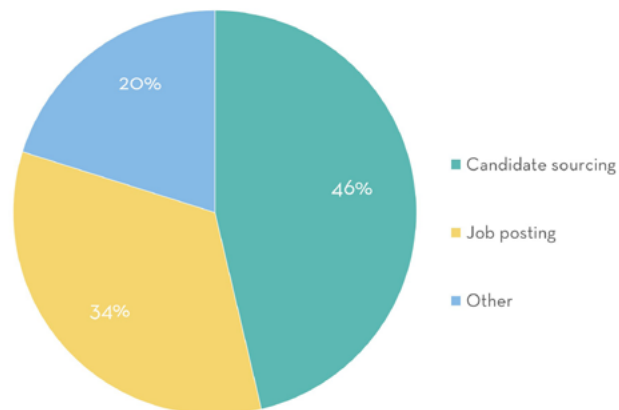


# Recruitment activities

This survey section focuses on the strategy and tools most effective in the day-to-day activity of the HR professional. The topics cover sourcing, job advertising, HR professional skilling, and shortlisting candidates. Direct candidate sourcing is the most effective activity in finding suitable candidates (Fig.1). Job posting is the second most effective activity. It is important to keep in mind that HR departments use a mix of these methods with the most effective being direct sourcing and job posting.

## What works best for you?

Figure 1. Candidate recruitment tactics

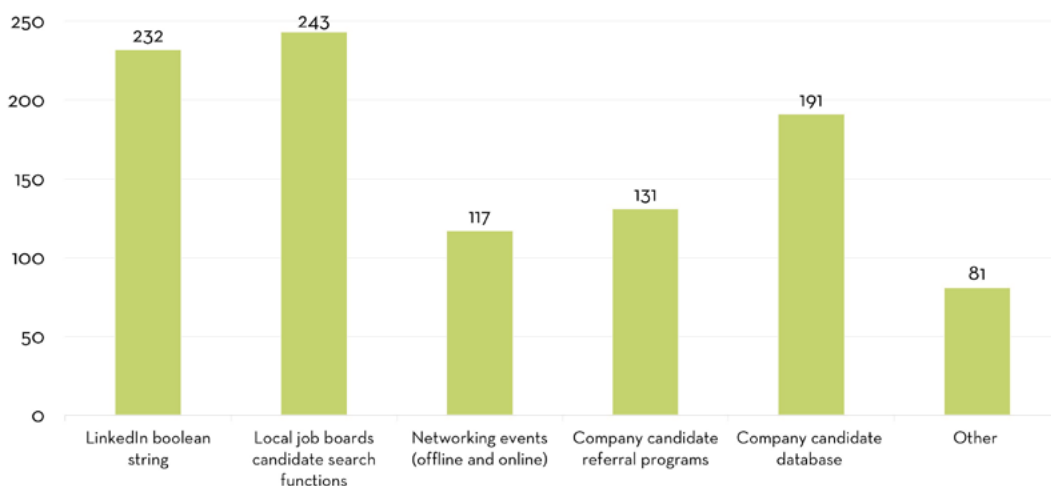


The other strategies used by recruiters involve contacting validated candidates from other projects, asking for referrals from within the HR team, using specialised forums for professionals interacting with potential candidates etc.

Most HR professionals find local job boards' candidate search functions as being the most effective tool for sourcing candidates (Fig.2). Close to this is the LinkedIn Boolean string search function and the sourcing done within the company candidate database. Referral and networking events seem to be the least effective channels to source candidates.

## What channels/tools do you use most often for sourcing candidates?

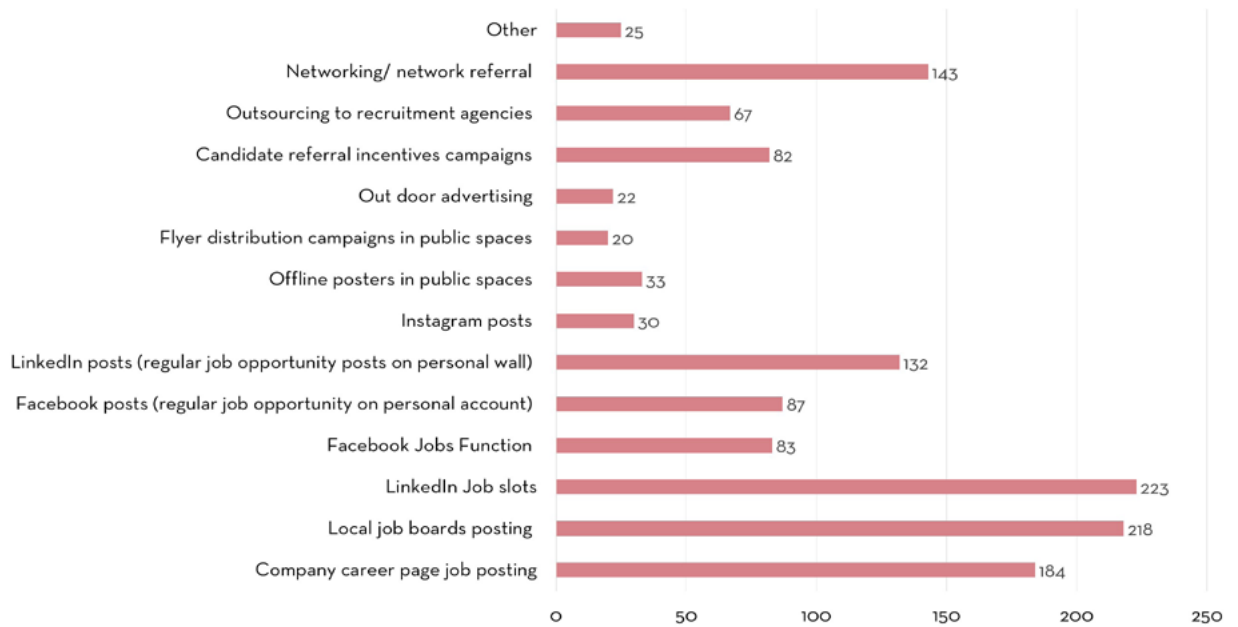
Figure 2. Most effective sourcing methods



Advertising job openings is still a widely used method by HR departments regardless of the industry. The most popular channel for posting job openings is LinkedIn followed by local job boards (Fig. 3). Company career pages are one of the best methods for recruiting but also for raising employer branding. There is a tendency for companies to develop dedicated integrations between the company career page and local job boards to redirect candidates directly to positions. This integration boosts the number of applicants in the databases, however the multiple steps needed for the application might lead to candidates dropping off during the process.

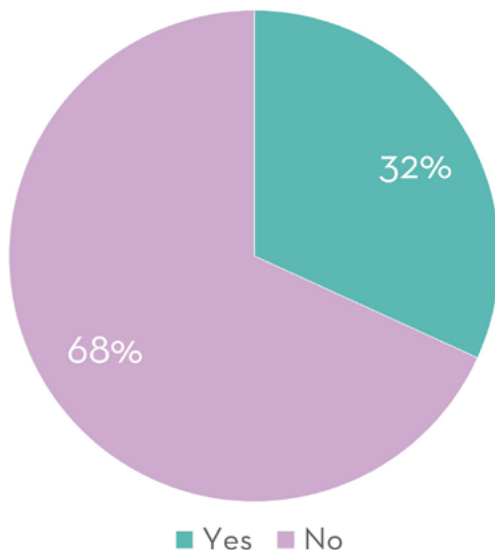
### What are the job advertising tools most effective for you?

Figure 3. Most used job advertising tools



### Do you consider there is a general need for extended shortlists of candidates?

Figure 4. The need of extended shortlists



Networking or referrals through the recruiter's networks is another commonly used tool. It relies mainly on the number of acquaintances and the engagement maintained by the HR professional. Conferences, networking events, webinars and other exposure occasions are key for this activity.

Following the global pandemic expectations and recruitment patterns of employers have started to shift. One of the things detected during the set-up of the survey was the need from employers to have "longer" shortlists. This was something new that wasn't common in the pre-pandemic environment.



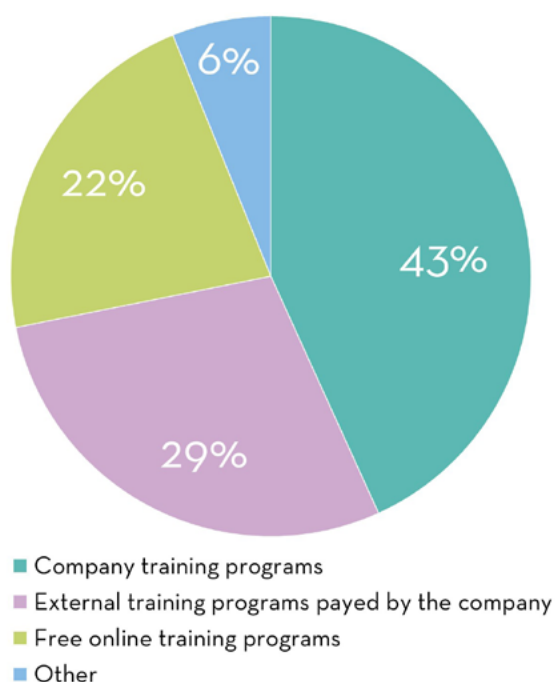


This research only validated this assumption partially (Fig.4). Only 32% of the respondents indicated a need for extended shortlist of candidates. They were asked to give more detail about this in an open field. Some of their answers were:

- Hiring managers want to see many candidates, to be sure they pick the right one.
- Difficulty to find the appropriate candidate both for position and company culture.
- We cannot find eligible candidates, because of the poor quality of candidates.
- To ensure even better matching of candidates (profiles, expectations, career preferences etc.) with job opportunities. To have a better back up scenario.
- Extended shortlist provides more options for the customer. So, they evaluate more effective and find the best match personnel for their company. Also, for another reason we lost some candidates during the recruitment process.
- Companies hesitate to choose from top 3 candidates, almost always want to see what more there is on the market. Usually choose between 6+ candidates.
- In the last year, the number of candidates that refused the employment offer - following 3-4 interviews, has increased exponentially. Ideally, from the candidates recommended the client would have to go into the final negotiations with two candidates.
- Managers often want to find the candidate that fit all the requirements even if they have seen capable enough candidates.

### How do you as an expert acquire new skills or go through reskilling?

Figure 5. Skilling & reskilling of HR professionals



Based on all the other answers from the report we can draw a couple of conclusions. Lengthier and more complex recruitment processes need extended shortlists because some candidates might accept other job offers in the meantime. Another explanation might be the fact that employers are looking to fill multiple roles and might present the candidates with other vacancy opportunities.

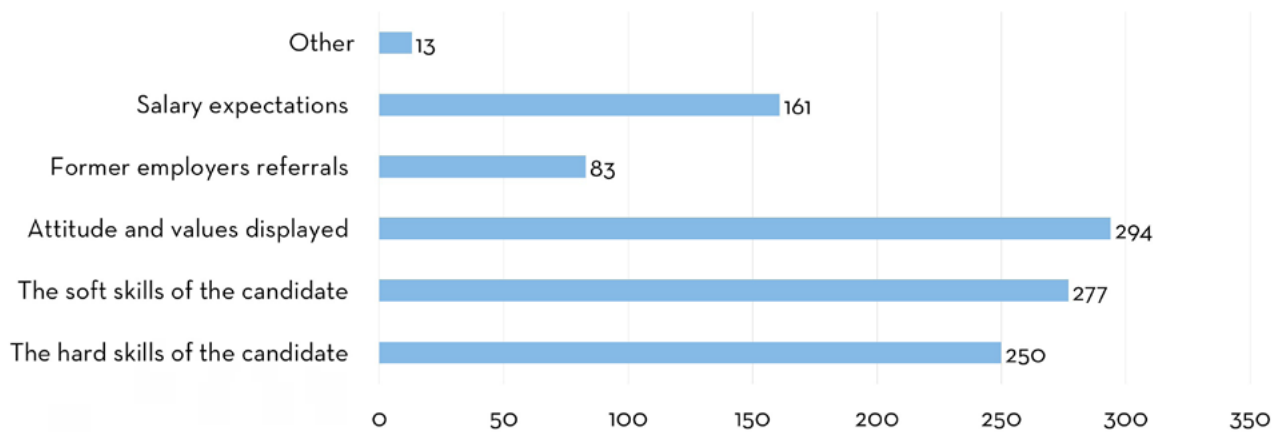
When looking at the way HR professionals acquire new skills or reskill, almost half of the respondents have gone through company training programs (Fig. 5). Wellbeing, inclusion, and mindfulness to the effects of working remotely were among the most popular training topics. External trainings paid by the company and free online training opportunities were accessed by almost the same percentage of respondents.

# Productivity of the recruitment process

This section of the survey explored the indicators that define the input and output of any recruitment process. It focuses on what recruiters pay the most attention to in the process, the effort they must make to fill in positions, and the way candidates react during a selection process. The most important aspect a recruiter looks for during the selection process is the attitude and values displayed by the candidate (Fig. 6). Close to this element there are the soft and hard skills that need to be demonstrated. Salary expectations are important but not as close as the first three answers.

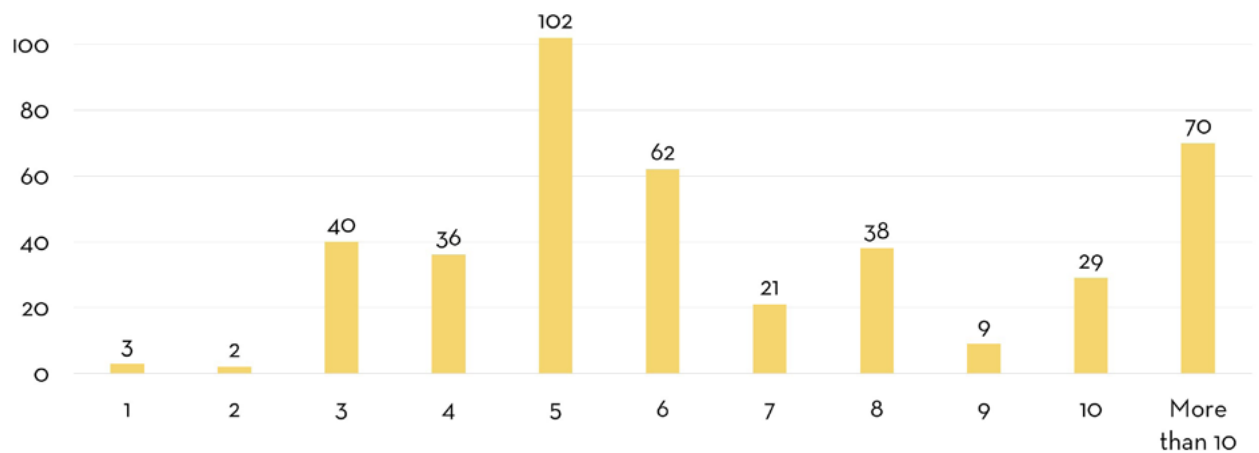
## What do you consider to be fundamental (during the selection process) in order to determine the right matching?

Figure 6. Fundamental element for right matching



## How many (on average) candidates do you have to interview in order to fill a position?

Figure 7. Average number of candidates interviewed for filling 1 position



This insight highlights the crucial role of the recruiter plays in identifying the most suitable candidates and the added value of the onboarding, accommodation, and retention process of the company. The topic of the selection process is linked to another point studied in the report. How much does the selection process influence staff retention? (Page 13) It shows once more the key role recruiters play in the functioning of the organisation.

The average number of candidates interviewed to fill in an opened position is five (Fig. 7). This number varies a lot depending on the level of experience, the industry, or motivation of the candidates. For example: some roles have a lengthier and more complex selection process so in time the number of interviewed candidates can be higher. Meanwhile, specific jobs with good (and public) salary and benefits are easier and take less time to fill. Regardless of the number of applicants, the profile matching will be better and after just a few checks the recruiter will find suitable candidates for the shortlist.

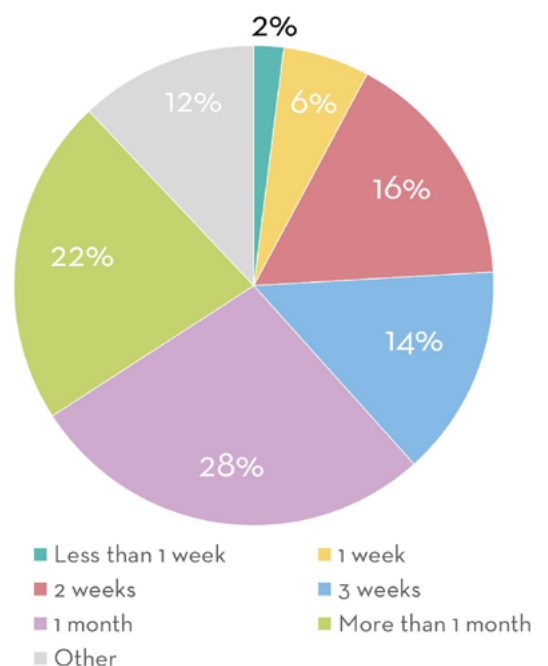
The average filling time for a position is also linked to the industry, the job requirements, or salary and benefits. On average from sourcing to placing a candidate it takes around 1 month or even more (Fig. 8). As above, the job requirements make a big difference in the recruitment process. Details about specific skills and abilities, training opportunities, travel requirements, foreign languages, objectives, and responsibilities determine whether candidates consider the job. Any other information that makes the job more appealing will also bring more suitable applicants - reducing the time it takes to fill that position.

The reasons a candidate has for changing roles or employer are hugely important for developing a company's retention strategy (Fig. 9). It turns out that the lack of career path visibility and the possibility of promotion is by far the main reason for an employee to consider other job opportunities.

The second reason has to do with the relationship the employee has with their manager. This reason validates the quote "People don't leave bad jobs; they leave bad managers." and highlights the importance of coherent and fair management practices.

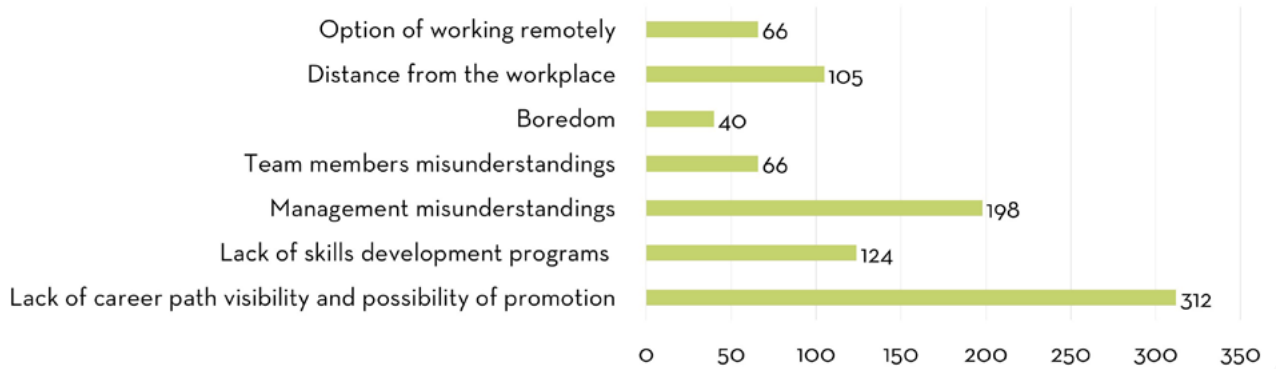
### What is the average filling time for a position?

Figure 8. The average filling time for one position



## What is the most common reason candidates invoke for changing jobs?

Figure 9. Main reasons for changing jobs

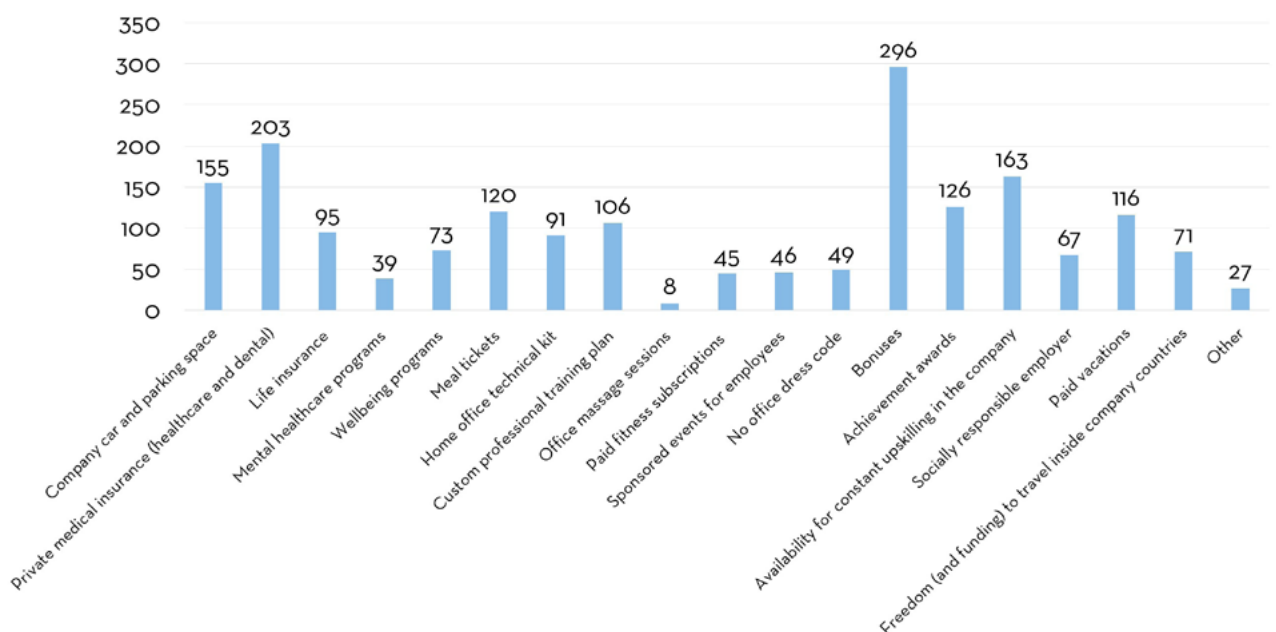


Linked to the 'Lack of career path visibility...' is the lack of skills development programmes, which seems to also play a big role in the employees' decision to change jobs. All three top reasons given in our survey here are worth seriously contemplating by HR decision makers when designing retention strategies. Another important reason given in the survey is the time spent on daily commuting. Employees who travel for a long distance to the workplace are more likely to search for jobs closer to home. When looking at compensation and benefits we inquired about all the items except the salary amount. Based on ground experience this

is the most motivating element for any jobseeker and the main negotiating topic in any recruitment process. So, we decided to focus on those benefits that are not tied down to the monthly salary. Even so, the monetary aspect turned out to be very important still. Bonuses related to work performances are by far the most attractive benefits. This is followed by private medical insurance and the constant upskilling within the company (Fig. 10). This last item reiterates the importance upskilling has for employees and how this should be an important focus for HR departments.

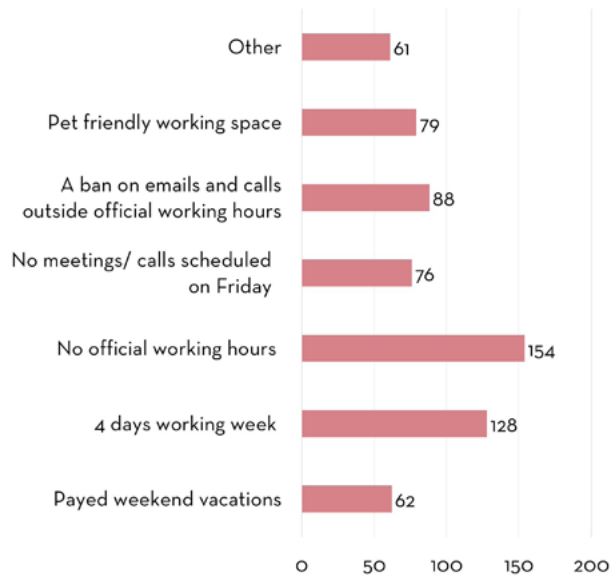
## What is the most attractive benefit/company perks for a candidate?

Figure 10. Most attractive benefits/perks



## What are the most common innovative non-transactional benefits you encountered?

Figure 11. Most common innovative benefits



As a follow-up question to this we asked what are the non-transactional innovative benefits that employees appreciate the most (Fig. 11). It turned out that the flexibility of not having any official working hours is the most appreciated benefit. This is followed by the format of the 4-day working week.

The closing topic of this section has to do with the way recruiters perceive the importance of the selection process in staff retention. With an appreciation of 3.85 (1- very little impact; 5 - very much impact) it clear that HR professionals view the selection process with high implications in retention. This is the stage where expectations are set for both candidate and employer, when objectives are drawn, and even short-term action plans are prepared.

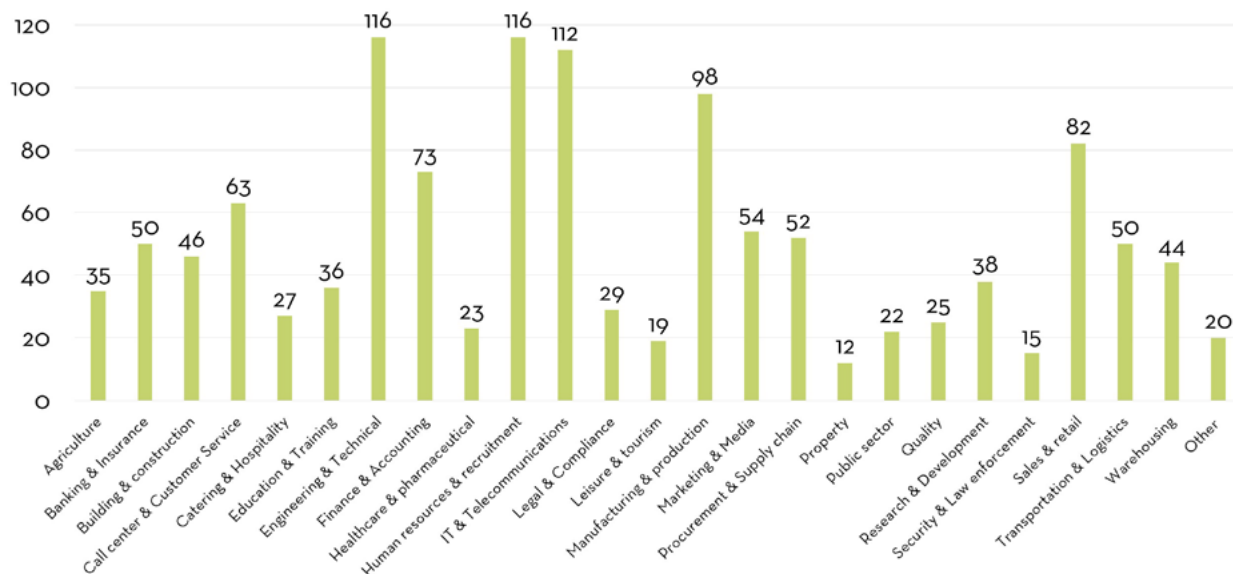


# Skills & background of the candidates

In the last year and a half, a lot of questions about skills and talent management were raised in HR communities. The disturbance caused by the pandemic has put skilling in focus. This section is diving deeper on this important topic. A starting point for better understanding the situation should be the way formal education delivers skills for the labour market and which industries are facing challenges.

## Which are the industries where you encountered skills gaps between formal education and labor market expectations?

Figure 12. Skills gap between formal education and market expectations



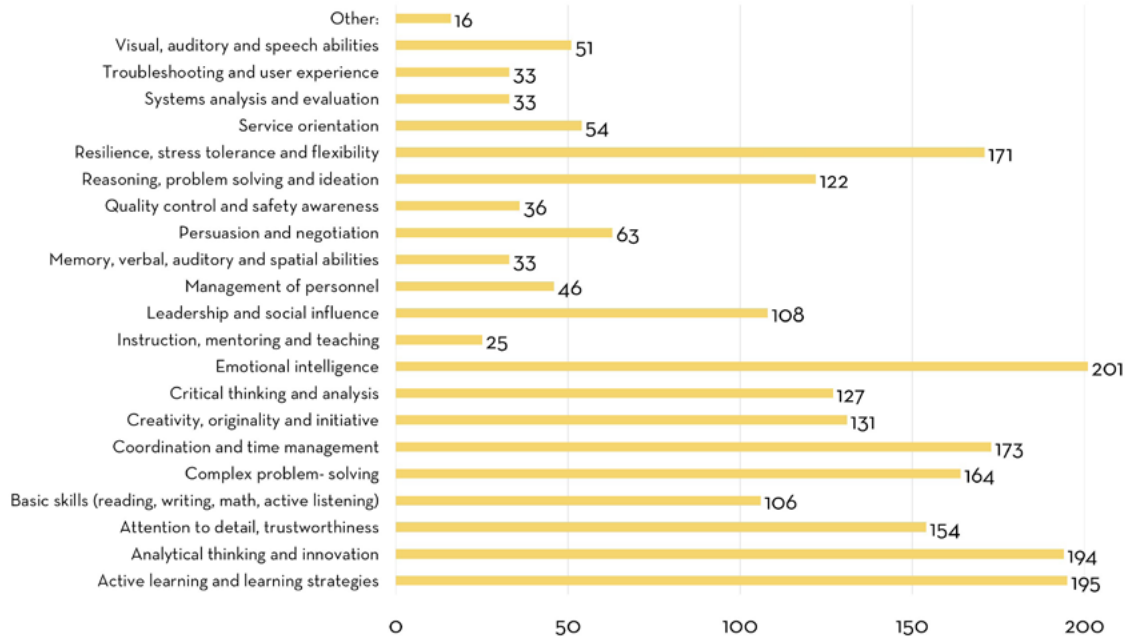
The survey has revealed that the Human Resources & Recruitment, Engineering & Technical, and IT & Telecom industries are facing some of the biggest gaps between the skills needed on the labour market and what formal education is delivering. The gap for the technical industries is widened by the technological advances that are occurring more often around us. The labour market is expected to be transformed by the upcoming broad rollout of 5G technologies so we should expect an even wider gap soon. The gap for Human Resources & Recruitment is generated by the lack of field experience of fresh graduates. This experience is essential for skilling a young HR professional. Universities haven't yet figured out how to accommodate this in their practical curriculum. The terminology used in this report makes a distinction between soft, hard, and digital skills. HR professionals have identified emotional intelligence, active learning and learning strategies, analytical thinking, and innovation as being the most important soft skills (Fig. 13).

This ranking confirms that rapid societal changes are pushing the demand for people with higher capabilities in adaptation and continuous learning.

The most important hard skills are reported to be the specialised industry skills, data analytics & data science, and software programming (Fig 14). This ranking also confirms the need for customised skills for fast-evolving technologies. The importance of specialised industry hard skills validates the fact that each technical branch is growing at a rapid pace.

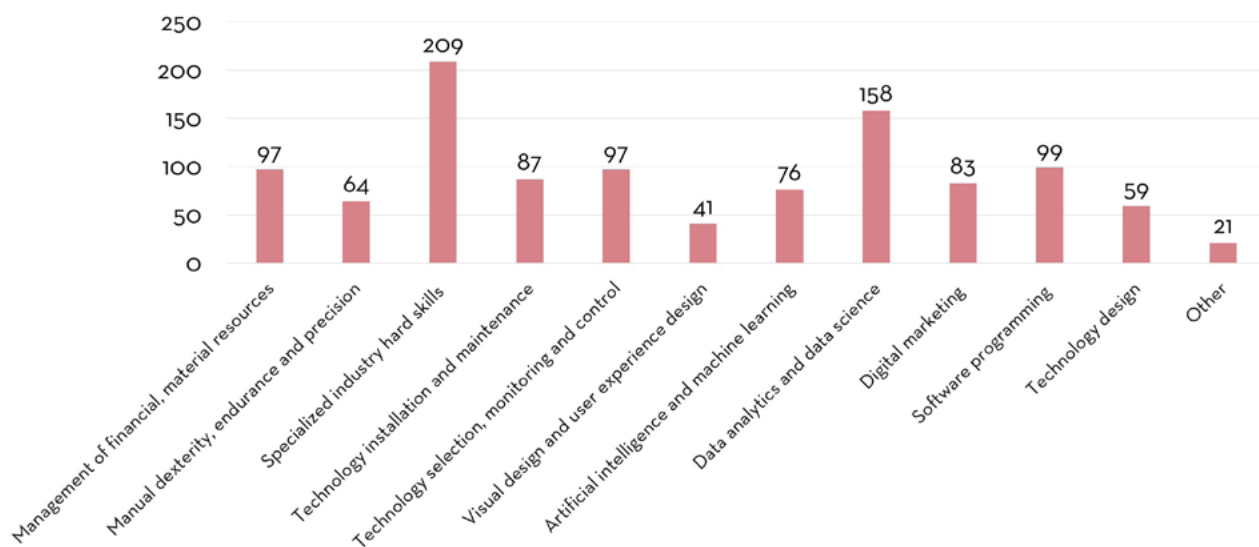
## What are the most important soft skills that a candidate must have?

Figure 13. Most important soft skills for candidates



## What is the most important hard and digital skills that a candidate must have?

Figure 14. The most important hard skills for candidates



Within the skills topic we ask the respondent if they have any roles that are harder to fill. Around half of the HR professionals responded that they are facing challenges in filling technical, IT and financial roles. We followed up with asking them if they noticed any skills shortage in the candidates screened for these positions. The top 10 skills that were identified as lacking are:

1. Emotional intelligence
2. Complex problem-solving
3. Analytical thinking and innovation
4. Specialised industry hard skills
5. Leadership and active influence
6. Active learning and learning strategies
7. Critical thinking and analysis
8. Creativity, originality, and initiative
9. Coordinating and time management
10. Resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility

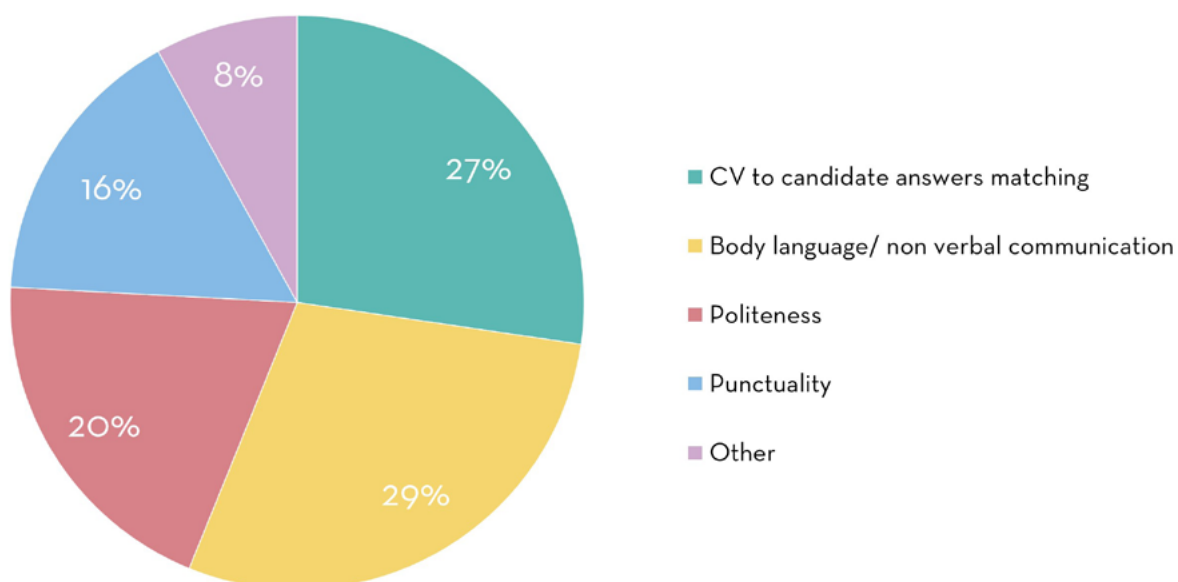
When asking about the aspects recruiters are paying more attention to during an interview, the non-verbal communication signifiers were slightly more important than the 'CV to candidate answers matching'. This insight is revealing once more the added value of the recruiter's activity during the selection process (Fig. 15).

The next insight is also focused on this stage of the selection process. HR professionals consider that the company's corporate values often play an important role in the recruitment process.

With an appreciation of 3.75 (1 - very rarely; 5 - very often) recruiters consider the company's values as influencing sourcing, interviewing, and the final selection decisions. This insight reiterates once more the how important HR departments are in building a strong organisational culture.

### What is the most important thing you pay attention to during an interview?

Figure 15. Most important items followed during an interview





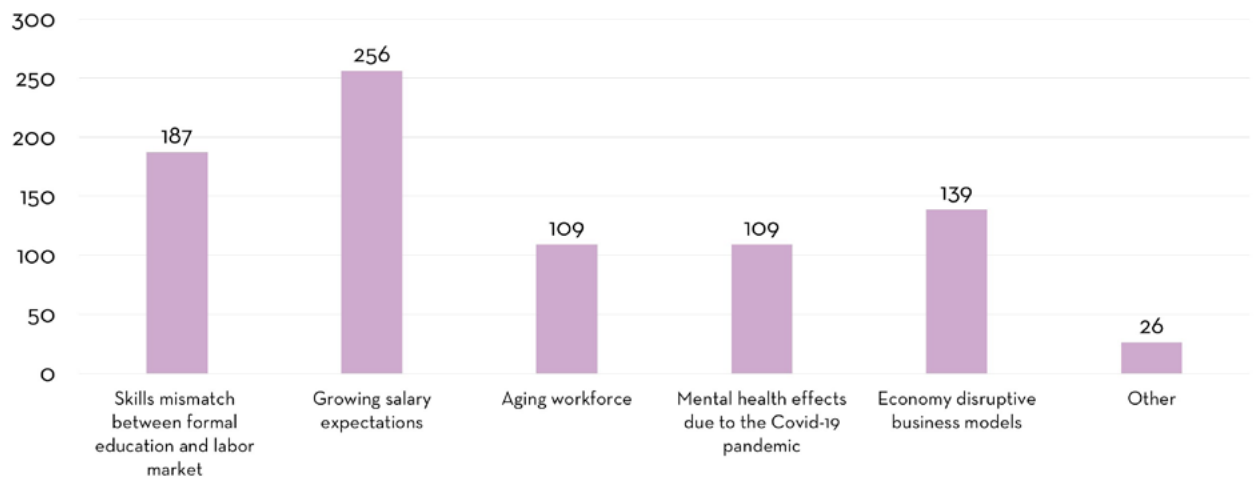
The final considerations we asked the respondents to share with us were the future challenges they foresee in the HR industry (Fig. 16). Growing salary expectations is the main challenge in the recruitment process, followed by the skills mismatch between formal education and the labour market. Growing salary expectations are regularly tied to growing inflation and they will always show a growing tendency.

The skills mismatch is a reality that can only be solved if multiple stakeholders join forces and align expectations. It is partly triggered by the fast pace of technology development, making it difficult for education systems to keep up.

Still there are some excellent examples of alignment between state/private education working closely to meet the expectations of employers.

### What are the biggest future challenges in your profession/field work?

Figure 16. Future HR challenges



There are many insights we can learn from in our HR 20.21 survey. From business managers to talent scouts and marketing specialists, all can pick relevant topics from the insights above and use them to devise strategy in their daily work. For us at Adecco this survey is the beginning of deeper country and industry specific reports that we have scheduled for release in Q2021.

It is also one of the many efforts we are making to better understand the world around us and to make the future work for everyone.



---

**THE ADECCO GROUP**

