

Decoding Digital Talent

Staying ahead of digitalisation



BCG THE NETWORK 
Global talent simplified

 **JobStreet** by SEEK

In a global survey, 9,900 digital workers shared their attitudes about remote work, job change, and what their ideal workplace should offer.

Employers, take note.

Decoding the Digital Talent Challenge

This article is part of BCG's Decoding Global Talent series, which investigates how work gets done around the world to uncover long-term workforce trends.

Millions of people around the globe either drastically changed how they worked or lost jobs because of the pandemic, social unrest, climate catastrophes, and other circumstances. Not digital talent. Most emerged from the recent crises relatively unscathed. Because advanced digital skills are in such high demand with employers that are modernizing their organizations, digital workers have even more options than before—and they know it.

Of all people with digital skills, **40% report actively job hunting** and **close to 75% expect to change positions in the near future**. It puts this group at the forefront of the “great resignation.” And it poses a particularly perplexing problem for employers outside the technology industry that need this highly desirable talent pool to transform their businesses but might not be digital workers’ first choice when they look for work.



Demographics of Digital Talent

For the purposes of this study, we defined digital talent as people in jobs in IT, automation, analytics, or digitization.

These insights and more come from a worldwide survey of digital talent conducted by BCG and The Network, a global alliance of recruitment websites.

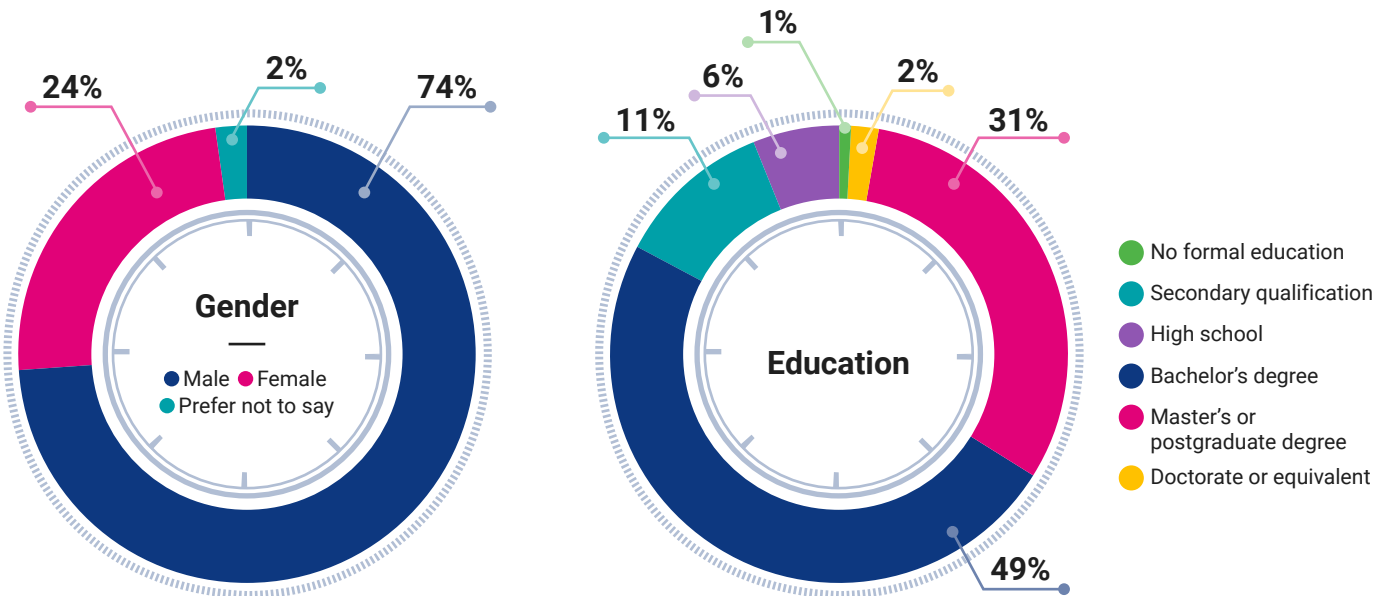
Approximately **9,900 respondents** working in digital fields were among

209,900 people in **190** countries

that BCG and The Network polled for the ongoing Decoding Global Talent series.

To learn more about the stories behind the numbers, we did follow-up interviews with digital workers and human resources leaders at both established companies and digital startups.

Total digital worker respondents: **9,864**



Our findings about digital workers' preferences provide a glimpse of what tomorrow could hold for the entire workforce. People in digital roles embraced new work habits during the pandemic and want to maintain some amount of job flexibility. They are citizens of the world, more open than most to working virtually for a company in a different country or moving abroad for work. They care about what's happening in society and the environment, and they want to work for an employer that shares their values.

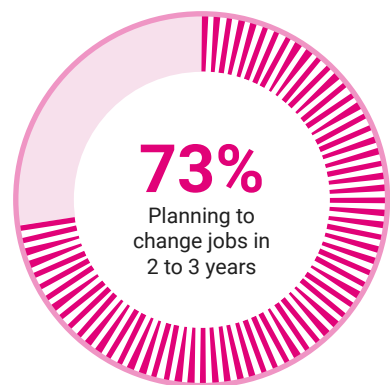
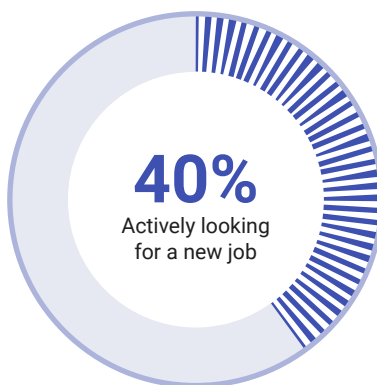
Digital Talent are Eager to Change Jobs – Within the Same Field

Digital workers are confident in their abilities and their desirability. That, perhaps, explains why so many are open to trading job security for a new opportunity, putting them at the vanguard of the great resignation—and presenting employers with both an opportunity and a risk.

Seeking an opportunity to advance their career is the primary reason digital workers give for looking for a new job. A higher salary is another prime motivator. As organizations continue to invest in new technological capabilities, they are also willing to invest more in IT talent.

Job Search Status

Four in ten digital workers are job hunting now, and 73% plan to look for a new job within the next two to three years.



Digital workers are being offered “very competitive packages across all industries” to jump to a different employer.

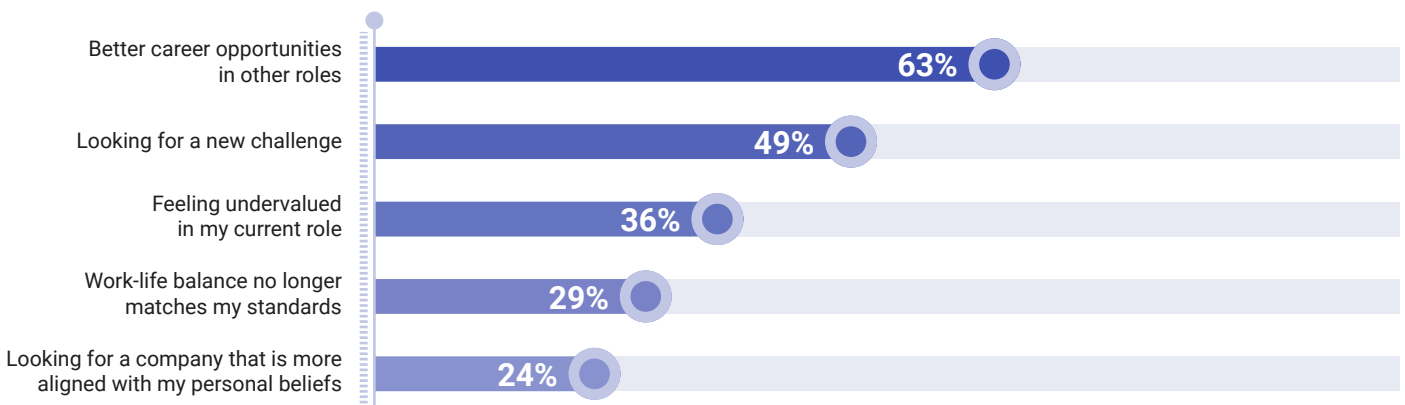
Ruthie Garelik, HR executive director for IT at The Estée Lauder Companies



Digital Talent are Eager to Change Jobs – Within the Same Field

Better opportunities or pay are not the only reasons why digital workers leave a position. Some change jobs when looking for a new challenge, to keep their skills up to date, or to remain competitive in the workforce. Others may embark on a job hunt if they don't feel valued by their employer, if their work isn't in balance with the rest of their lives, or if their employer's values no longer line up with their personal beliefs.

Key reasons for wanting a job change

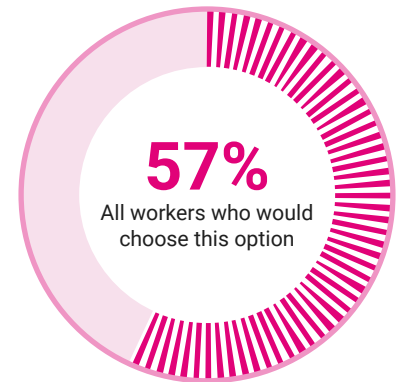


Although they are interested in switching jobs, far fewer digital workers are as keen to change careers as their counterparts in nondigital roles. Those who would consider picking up new skills for a new job mostly want to stay within their own fields of IT, digital, automation, and analytics. Some would consider a career shift to consulting or engineering.

Digital roles are also the most attractive reskilling target for workers in almost every other profession. Twenty percent or more of people currently working in a wide swath of professions would willingly learn new skills if doing so led to a job in digitization, automation, IT, or technology.

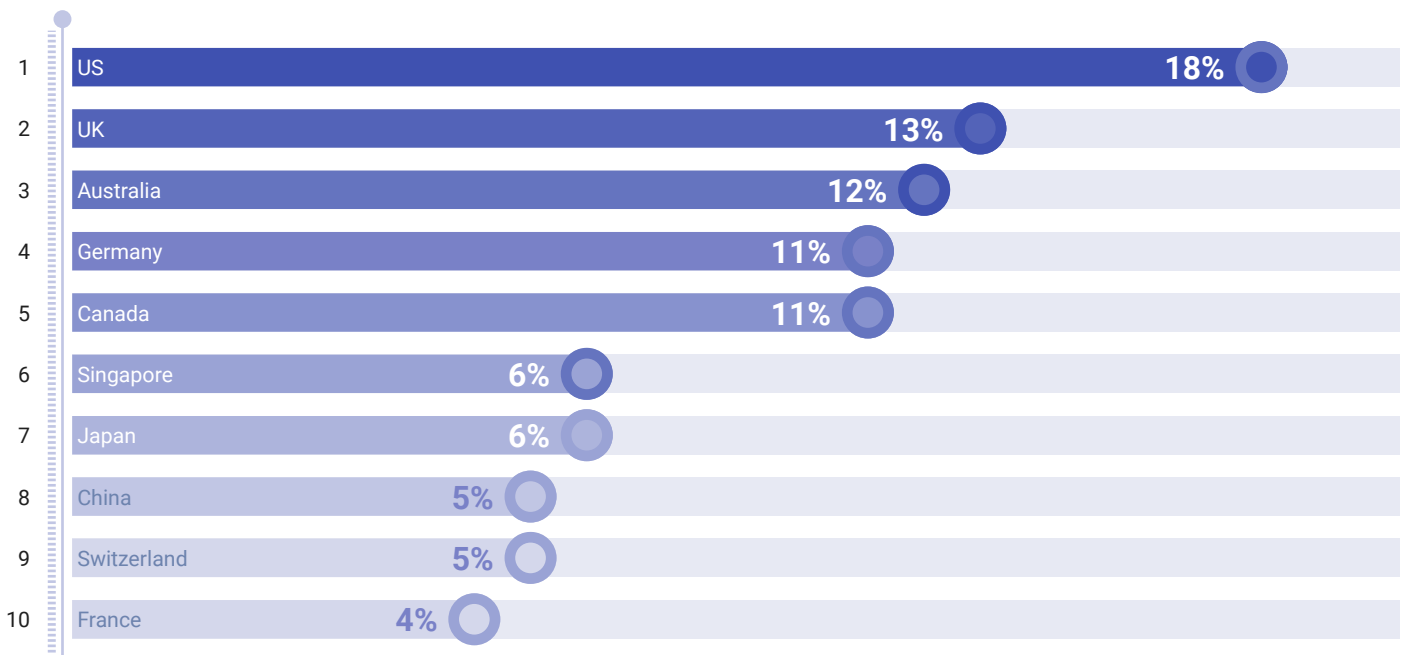
Comfort with Remote Work Paves the Way for Virtual International Assignments

For digital talent, working remotely during the pandemic spurred an interest in working virtually for an international employer. In all, 68% percent of digital workers say they are willing to work remotely for an employer that lacks a physical presence in their country, significantly more than the 57% cross-job average. It's also higher than the 55% of digital workers who say they would move abroad for work.



Digital workers' interest in remote international employment isn't indiscriminate. Even though it would not involve a physical move, they would rather work for employers headquartered in certain countries over others. When it comes to working virtually, their first preference would be to work for a company based in the US, followed by the UK and Australia. Chinese and Singaporean companies are also attractive to digital workers interested in remote employers.

Top locations where digital workers would look for remote employment



Comfort with Remote Work Paves the Way for Virtual International Assignments

The trend toward virtual work means that corporate and public-sector employers have new options for filling hard-to-find roles such as AI expert or IT systems administrator. Because visa limitations don't apply to remote work, employers can explore sources of talent that previously were not attractive or feasible.

Before the pandemic, HelloFresh, the German company whose meal prep kits are sold around the world, relocated tech talent to Berlin from as far away as South Africa, India, and the US. But the pandemic and the strong local competition for talent made the company open to new talent practices, including remote employment. During 2021, more than a fourth of HelloFresh's tech workforce joined the company remotely from another country, according to Johannes Willberg, head of HelloFresh's people operations. The majority is still expected to relocate to Berlin, but until then, they may work from their home countries for up to six months. The company also offers its Berlin-based employees the chance to work abroad one or two months a year. "And to tap into rising talent markets, we are exploring fully remote setups for certain tech teams across different countries," Willberg said.

At the same time, virtually engaging foreign digital talent presents new challenges, including:



Determining salary and compensation in regions with different costs of living



Adjusting payroll and insurance systems



Expanding data security



Corporate culture

so that employees are safe and feel welcome regardless of where they are.

Would consider a virtual relocation under the right circumstances. "You would still need to get used to the company's thinking and culture".

Matej Hrapko, 41, a mechanical engineer from Slovakia who lives in Austria and works for an airbag manufacturer

Fewer Digital Workers are Willing to Move Abroad for a Job

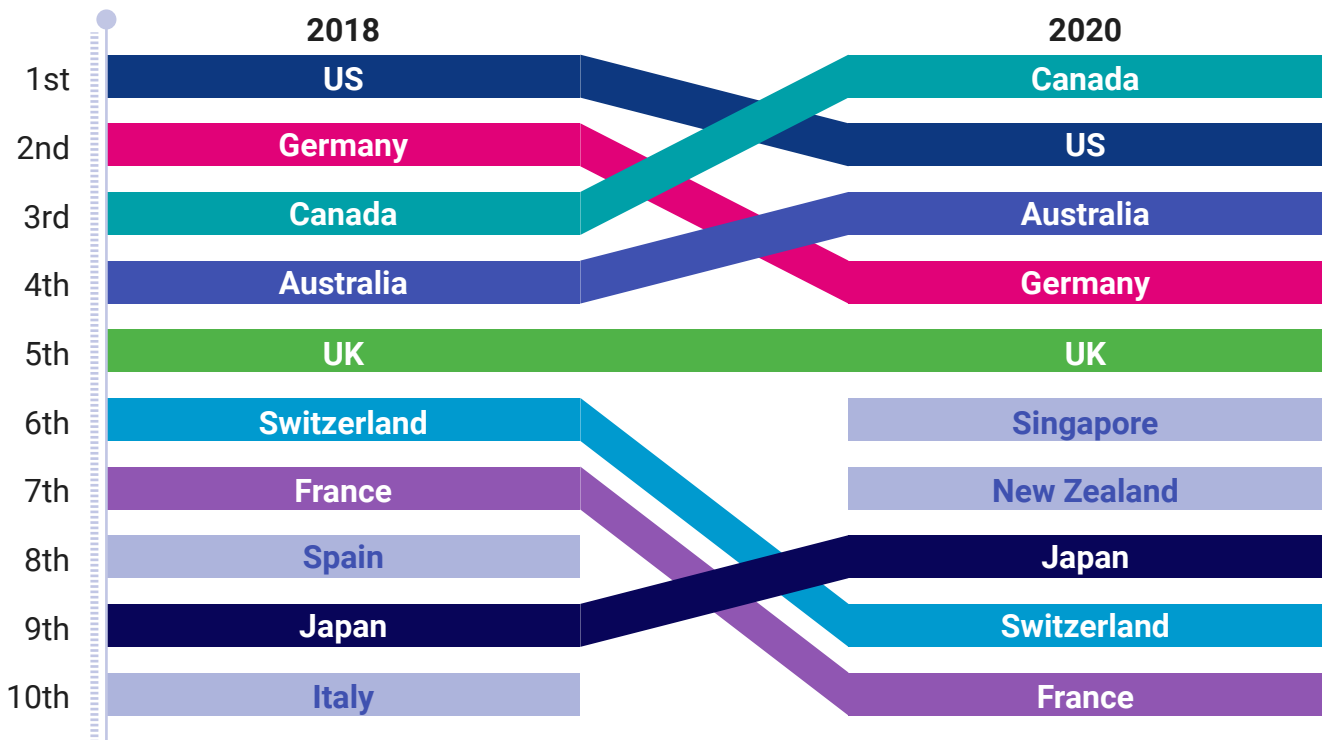
When we first studied workforce trends for digital talent in 2018, 67% of respondents were open to an international move for work. That number has declined ever since, in part because of long-term trends toward stricter entry restrictions and increasingly nationalistic immigration policies. The worldwide health crisis created by the pandemic exacerbated the drop. And as we found, many digital workers don't feel that moving abroad for a job is necessary if they can find a job that will come to them.

In our latest survey, only 55% of digital workers would move to a different country for a job. However, that's still higher than the 50% global average.

Of those who are open to moving abroad for work, the destinations they'd choose look somewhat different than they did two years ago. Canada is now their top target, knocking the US into second place. Those countries are followed by Australia, Germany, and the UK.

Digital workers' top choices for working abroad are changing

Locations ranked by percentage of respondents who would physically move there for work



Fewer Digital Workers are Willing to Move Abroad for a Job

“I wouldn’t relocate to the US because I perceive the country as unsafe, and the recent issues with police would discourage me from moving there.”

*Cherif Ahmed Alexandre,
an IT systems consultant
from Ivory Coast*

An even bigger trend is the Asia-Pacific region’s emergence as a go-to destination for a foreign relocation. Several Asian-Pacific countries—including Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, and Japan—increased in popularity since 2018. Digital workers view many of these countries as more welcoming than other parts of the world, as more stable socially or economically, and as better managers of early waves of the pandemic.

Other countries’ popularity gains come at the expense of the US, Germany, Switzerland, and France, all perennial favorites for working abroad that today are perceived as less hospitable to outsiders for any number of reasons. It’s a warning shot for employers in those countries: do not automatically assume that people with desirable skills—such as digital capabilities—would be interested in a job offer that requires them to move to your location.

London, a global finance and business center, is still the top city that digital talent would consider for a transnational job-related move. But changing preferences have caused other US and European cities to fall in popularity while the attractiveness of their Asian counterparts has increased.



Thank you for downloading this report.

Contact your local JobStreet or JobsDB representative to discover how we can help your hiring strategy.

Malaysia	ads-my@jobstreet.com
Singapore	ads-sg@jobstreet.com
Hong Kong	cs@jobsdb.com
Philippines	ads-ph@jobstreet.com
Thailand	cs@jobsdb.co.th
Indonesia	ads-id@jobstreet.com