

# Talent Pulse: Candidates Seek the Human Factor and New Career Paths

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Initiatives: [CIO Leadership, Culture and People](#); [Executive Leadership: Talent](#); [Future of Work Reinvented Resource Center](#); [Recruiting](#)

Executive leaders facing the global talent crunch should take note: Candidates are drawn to employers that treat staff as humans. And more than half of applicants are looking for a change in career as they seek roles and training opportunities to pivot.

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Job candidates have options — more than seven in 10 of those receiving an offer have at least one other on the table. Those seeking employment want more than a good salary. They are drawn to an organization that genuinely cares about its people both inside and outside the office — rather than just seeing them as an employee. It's the most universal value that applicants are looking for across industries, roles and countries.

In addition to the human factor, 56% of candidates applied for a job outside their career in the past year and they are prioritizing learning opportunities to achieve that. This puts added pressure on executives, who are already worried about workforce retention, training and hiring. <sup>1</sup>

To understand more about what candidates want in this tight labor market, review the analysis below. It also reveals a hidden opportunity to remove barriers to internal mobility, where women are more inclined than men to head for the exit.

## The Human Connection Matters the Most to Candidates

Eighty-five percent of candidates told us it was important for them to be seen as a person and not just an employee. This was a preference for the highest number of respondents in the survey <sup>2</sup> (see Figure 1). They're also looking for organizations that support their:

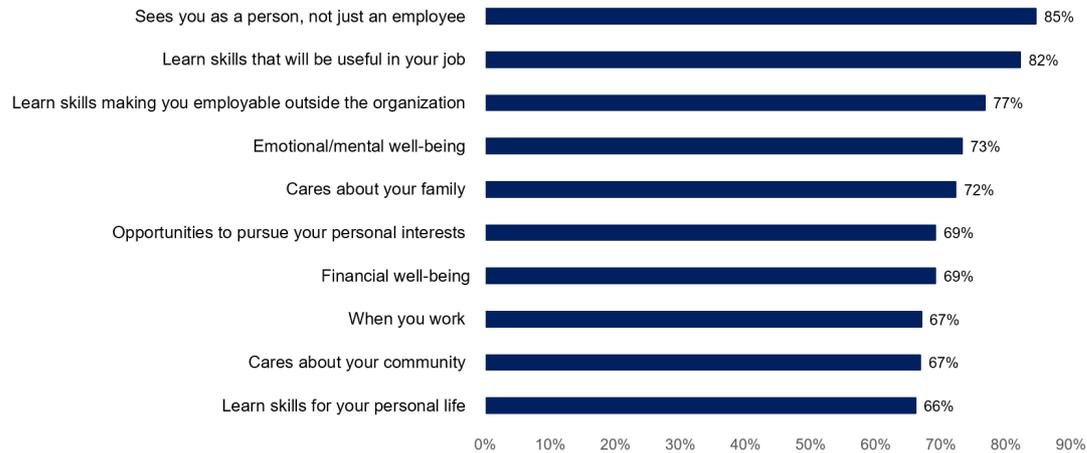
- Emotional and mental well-being (73%)

- Family (72%) and their community (67%)

Figure 1. Top 10 Candidate Preferences

## Top 10 Candidate Preferences

Percentage of candidates citing attributes for a new job are of high importance



n = 3,000 candidates  
Source: 2021 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey 2021



### More Than Half Seek Jobs Facilitating a Change in Career

Candidates want opportunities to learn for their job (82%) make them more employable outside their organization (77%) and develop skills to use in their personal lives (66%).

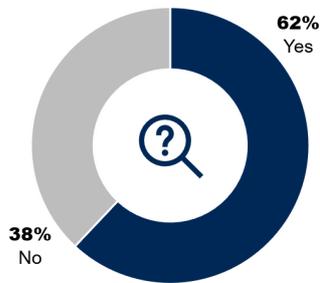
That’s being driven by a desire to reframe their ambitions – with 56% applying for jobs outside of their current career and 58% taking courses to help them switch (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Candidates Looking for a Change in Career

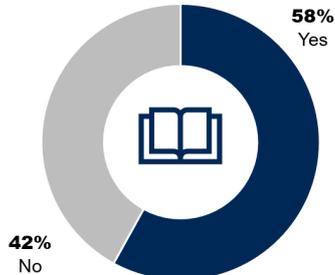
## Candidates Looking for a Change of Career

Percentage of Candidates

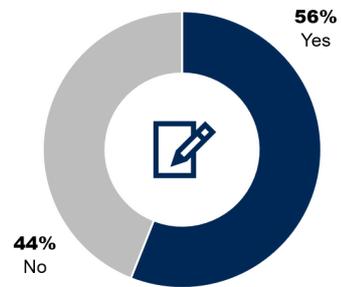
Explored a Career Change



Took Courses to Learn New Skills Outside Their Current Role



Applied for Jobs Outside Their Current Career



n = 3,000 candidates

Source: 2021 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey

Note: Candidates were asked whether they had done each action within the last year.

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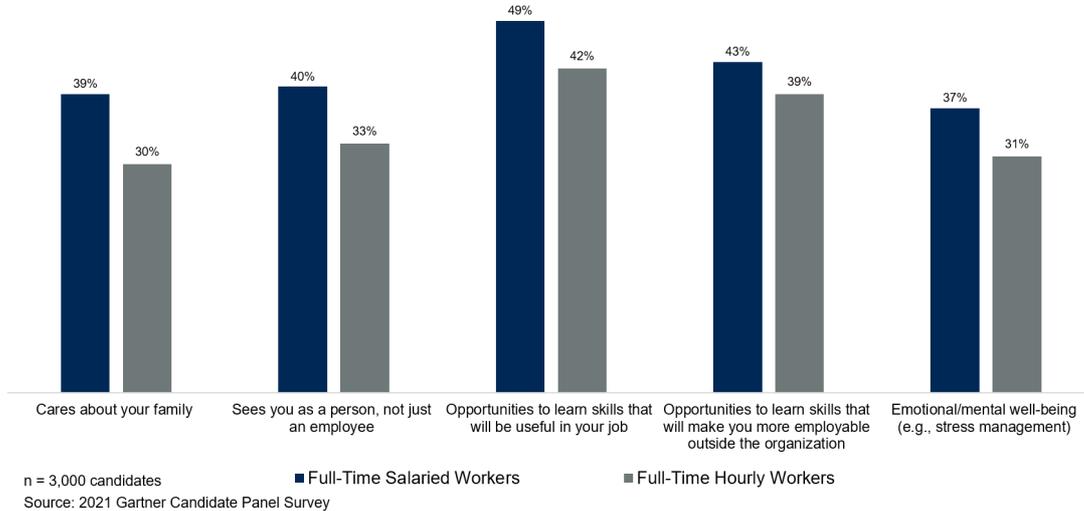
## Hourly Workers Are Struggling More to Find Jobs With the Qualities They Desire

Full time hourly workers have a harder time than salaried workers matching their preferences to employment opportunities on nearly every job attribute, including all of the top five (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Job Preferences for Hourly Workers Are Harder to Find

## Job Preferences For Hourly Worker Candidates are Harder to Find

Percentage of candidates reporting high ease in finding jobs with desirable traits



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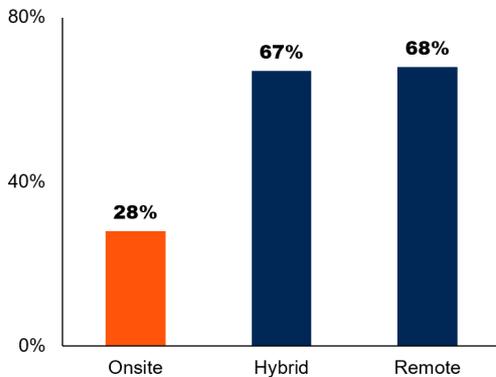
## A Quarter of On-site Job Hunters Are Looking for Remote Roles

The desire for work location flexibility is no longer limited to those who currently enjoy those benefits. Over a quarter of on-site workers (28%) rate a hybrid work environment — meaning a mix of on-site and remote — as highly important in their next job (see Figure 4).

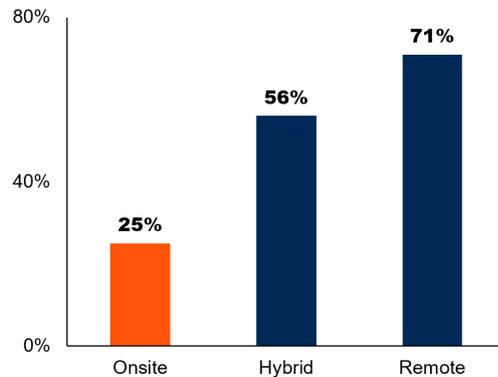
Figure 4. On-site Workers Who Also Want Hybrid or Remote

## Onsite Workers Who Also Want Hybrid or Remote

Candidates Rating Hybrid Work Environment as Highly Important in Their Job Search  
By Candidates' Current Work Arrangement



Candidates Rating Remote Work Environment as Highly Important in Their Job Search  
By Candidates' Current Work Arrangement



n = 3,000 candidates  
Source: 2021 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey



### More Candidates Start Their Search Externally Than Internally

Only one-third of candidates begin their job search by looking internally first. And while 26% start by looking internally and externally at the same time, four in ten candidates (41%) begin by looking outside the organization. This represents a significant lost opportunity for companies to retain talent through internal mobility.

Even more, there's a gender gap to consider:

- Only 29% of women look internally first, compared with 37% of men.
- More women (27%) than men (19%) said they had no desire to apply internally in the last 12 months.

So why do people look outside their organization? Forty-two percent of candidates who searched externally first said they simply wanted to leave their organization. Other more specific reasons given:

- It's easier to achieve career growth (32%)
- It's easier to find and apply for attractive jobs (27%)
- It's easier to achieve compensation growth (27%)

- The process does not require manager approval (18%)
- The steps in the process are more clear (16%)

Seven in 10 (71%) said they had faced barriers to internal mobility – and just one in ten candidates said they hadn’t faced any barriers.

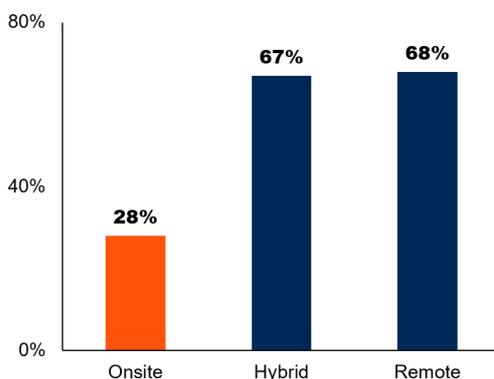
Seventeen percent didn’t apply for an internal job opening because there is generally a candidate who is already favored (see Figure 5).

Others cited difficulties applying internally (14%), matching jobs to career progression goals (13%) or skills and experience (13%), not enough pay (13%) and not wanting to alert their manager (12%).

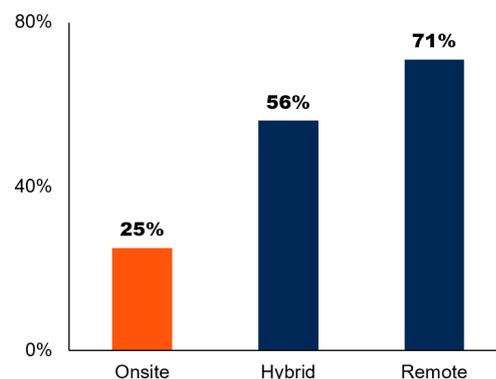
**Figure 5. Top 10 Barriers to Internal Mobility**

## Onsite Workers Who Also Want Hybrid or Remote

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n = 3,000 candidates  
Source: 2021 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey

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## The Candidates With the Most Offers: Executives, IT and Engineers

Almost half (49%) of candidates who’ve received an offer are also considering at least two others. Seventy-one percent have at least one other offer. Executives and those in IT, engineering and quality assurance, and manufacturing are even more likely to have received multiple offers (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Candidates Receiving Multiple Offers, by Function

### Candidates Receiving Multiple Offers, by Function

Percentage of respondents in different functions who received at least two other offers



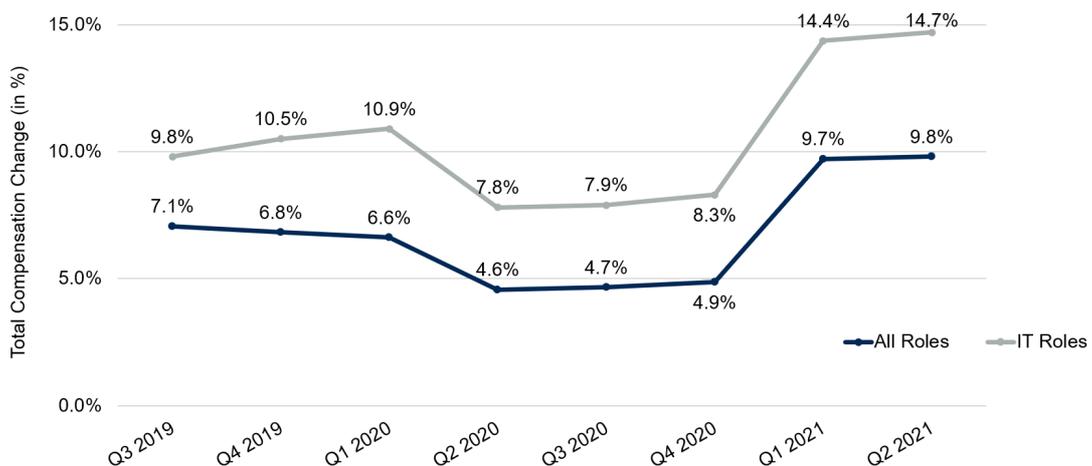
### Expectations for a Salary Bump Climb to Almost 15% for IT Roles

Global workforce data <sup>3</sup> shows their expectations for the pay rise they will get for switching jobs climbed higher than in the pre-pandemic period – a trend that is paralleled at a lower level, around 10%, across the entire workforce (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Compensation Switching Premium Increases

### Compensation Switching Premium Increases

How do employees expect their total compensation to change if they accepted a job with a new employer?



Source: Gartner Global Labor Market Surveys



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Contact [Daniel](#) with any questions or comments.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Fifty-two percent of directors said workforce retention, training and hiring were among their organization's top five strategic priorities for the next two years. This was the second most common category after digital tech initiatives. N = 272 directors. Source: 2022 Gartner View From the Board of Directors' Survey.

Forty-one percent of executives said they were "significantly concerned" about employee turnover. Half said they were "somewhat concerned." N = 200 executive leaders. Source: Gartner COVID-19 Variants, Vaccinations and Implications on Reopening the Workplace Webinar (24 August).

<sup>2</sup> Survey data on candidates comes from the 2021 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey. This survey – conducted in May and June 2021 – collected the preferences, experiences and behaviors of 3,000 candidates across the globe. This survey polled recent candidates in 10 countries, 24 industries and 21 functions. Respondents were required to have met the following criteria to qualify for the survey:

- Applied for one or more jobs in the past 12 months
- Contacted by at least one organization to complete an assessment or participate in an interview in the past 12 months
- Participated in one or more interviews in the past 12 months

- Worked at an organization of 1,000 or more employees

Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole but do reflect the sentiments of the respondents surveyed.

<sup>3</sup> The Global Labor Market Survey is carried out once every quarter. Every quarter 25,000 employees globally participate in this survey. Responses are collected in 20 different languages from employees in 40 different countries. This is the 11th consecutive year we have conducted a quarterly Global Labor Market Survey. Respondents were asked to indicate their expected perceived compensation increase if they were to join a new employer in near future. The number of respondents in each survey are listed here:

**Table 1: Global Market Survey Respondents**

Quarter	IT Employees	All Employees
3Q19	2,620	29,994
4Q19	3,299	40,003
1Q20	2,218	25,006
2Q20	2,414	25,070
3Q20	2,383	25,004
4Q20	3,161	33,006
1Q21	1,836	18,015
2Q21	1,852	18,001

Source: Gartner

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