

MASENTÓ INDUSTRY TRENDS SURVEY 2024/25

2ND EDITION
2025

INTRODUCTION

Masentó Group is a leading recruitment company, delivering high-calibre contract and permanent talent solutions on a global scale. Over the past 12 months, we have witnessed a period of extraordinary transformation, marked by political shifts and rapid advancements in artificial intelligence that continue to reshape global economies.

In response, organisations are increasingly focused on cost optimisation, process efficiency and digital transformation. Technology investment has become a strategic imperative for businesses seeking to remain competitive and resilient.

This marks the second edition of Masentó's annual survey, and we are pleased to report a notable increase in participation. Our objective is to provide year-on-year insights into key workforce trends, including job security, hybrid working models, compensation structures and rate fluctuations across specific industry sectors.

We also place strong emphasis on candidate experience. Feedback from our interview process section offers valuable perspectives at a time when attracting and retaining top talent remains a critical challenge.

Please note that the findings presented reflect the views of this year's survey participants and may not represent the entirety of our candidate and client network.

Adrian Carboni
Founder & CEO at Masentó Group



PERMANENT INTRODUCTION

This survey provides a snapshot of current candidate sentiment, preferences, and priorities across the permanent hiring market. Drawing on responses from professionals across a range of sectors and regions, these findings offer valuable insight into job functions, compensation expectations, interview experiences, and broader market dynamics.

Initial data highlights strong interest in management and functional consulting roles, reflecting demand for leadership and business process expertise. AI and Data also features prominently, underscoring the advance in technology.

It is important to note that these insights reflect the views of our community, which strongly features SAP, Data & AI and Leadership and Executive network.

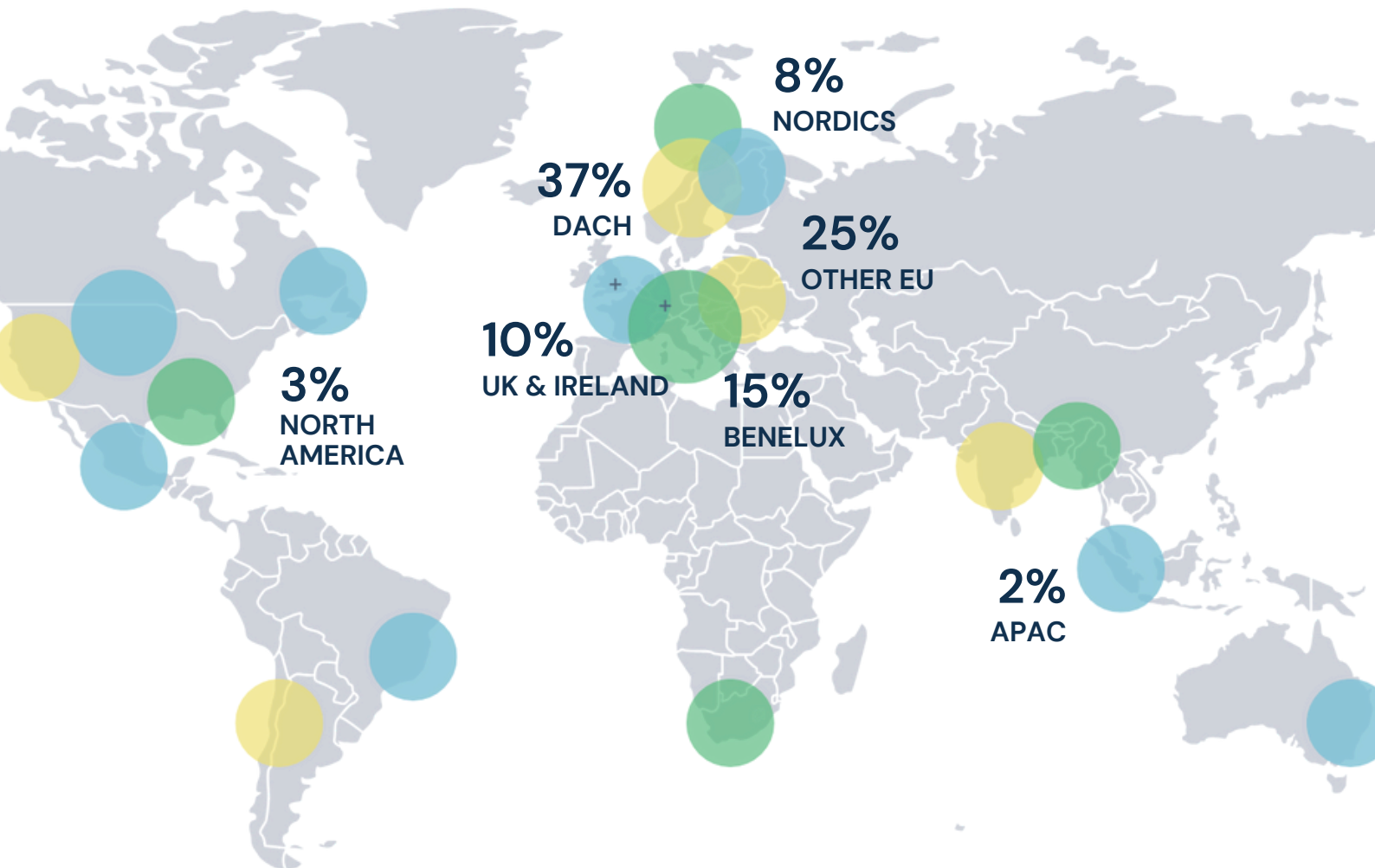
Richard Blackburn
Partner, Masentó Search



DEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

Survey Scope and Focus

Our analysis provides a data-led view of permanent employment trends across key global regions, with a particular emphasis on Europe, where Masentó maintains a strong operational presence and market insight.



Survey responses reveal significant regional differences in the share of permanent employees. Respondents from the DACH region reported the highest proportion, followed by Other EU countries. In contrast, participants from the UK and Ireland indicated a much lower share, suggesting a more flexible workforce model. Responses from APAC, BENELUX and North America showed moderate levels, while North America reported the lowest.

Richard Blackburn
Partner, Masentó Search

"Understanding regional preferences for permanent employment is key, businesses that align their workforce models accordingly will be better positioned to attract and retain skilled professionals."



PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

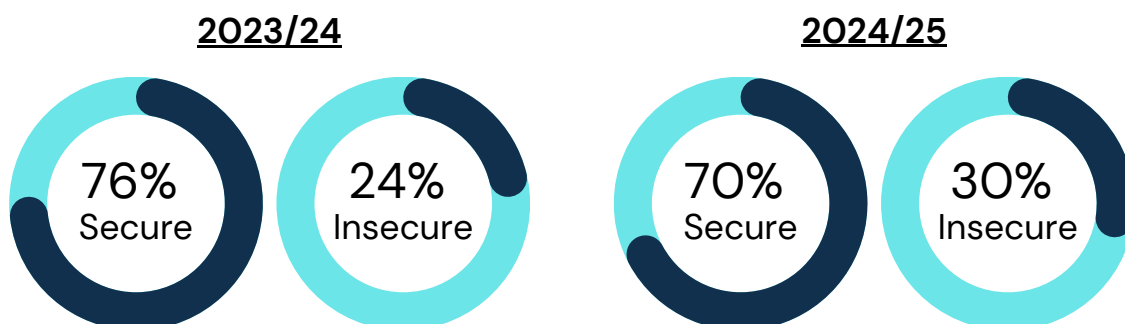
Evolving Perceptions of Job Security

This analysis highlights current trends in permanent hiring, evolving candidate expectations, and broader market dynamics.

Between 2023–24 and 2024–25, there has been a modest shift in perceptions of job security. The proportion of individuals who feel secure in their roles has slightly declined. This change reflects a cautious sentiment in response to shifting macroeconomic conditions and measured business adjustments.

Despite this, the majority of professionals continue to report a sense of job security. This resilience suggests a foundational confidence in the market's trajectory and may signal the early stages of recovery and renewed growth, confirming how essential technology is to the business landscape.

We asked respondents how they would best describe their current sense of job security.



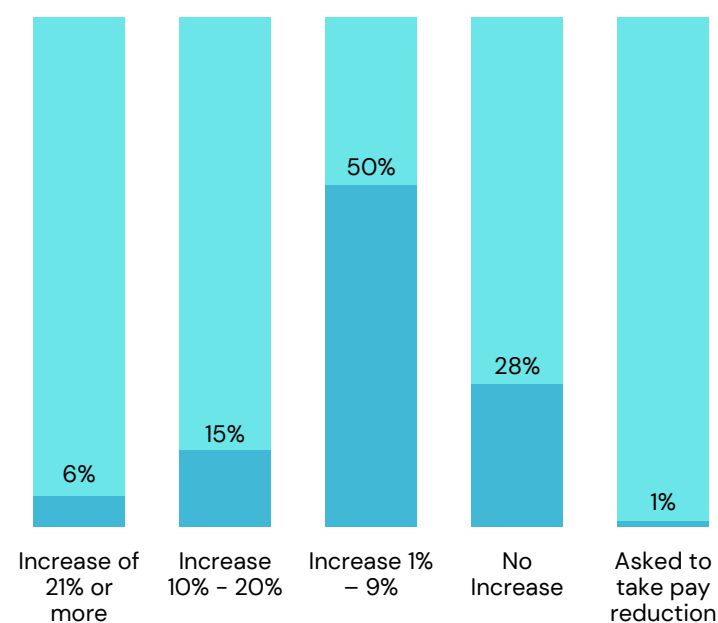
This measured change in job security reinforces the importance of proactive talent strategies as organisations navigate an evolving economic landscape.

PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

Pay Movement and Retention Dynamics

This section presents key insights into remuneration trends within the permanent market, based on our latest survey of candidates and clients. The findings highlight current salary benchmarks and evolving compensation expectations across the sector.

Outcome of Pay Reviews Conducted in the Past Twelve Months

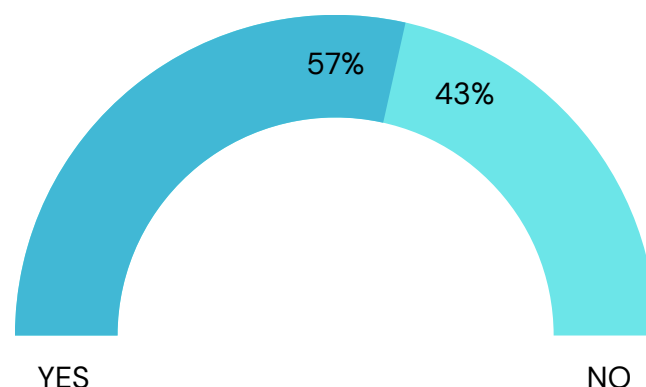


This year's findings reveal a notable decline in the number of professionals receiving pay increases of 10% or more, signalling a more financially cautious environment. At the same time, a growing proportion of respondents reported receiving no salary increase at all, reflecting the budgetary pressures many organisations are currently navigating.

Despite financial constraints, the market remains competitive. Counter-offers are still widely used to retain top talent, highlighting the ongoing demand for high performers. The visual above reflects this contrast between limited pay growth and strategic retention efforts.

The visual below reveals a balanced sentiment on remuneration, with 57% of respondents expressing satisfaction and 43% indicating dissatisfaction.

We asked respondents whether they are currently satisfied with their remuneration.



PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

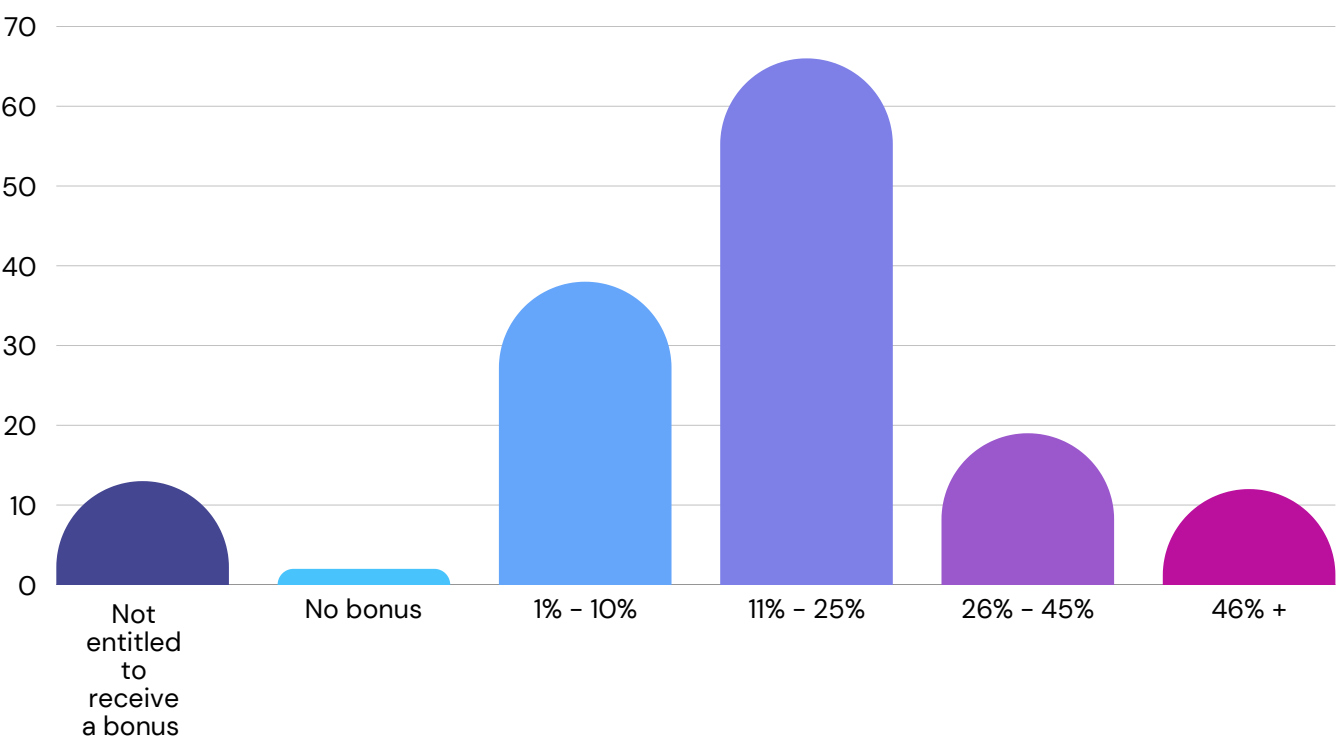
Salary and Bonus Trends

This section explores current trends in salaries and bonuses across permanent roles, offering a view into how compensation aligns with demand and market confidence.

Salary data indicates that management roles command the highest earnings (**£143,728 to £175,726**), reflecting their seniority and strategic influence. Functional consultants also receive strong compensation (**£108,048 to £123,667**), while technical roles such as data scientists follow closely with competitive packages. Overall, leadership and functional expertise continue to attract a premium, with data-focused roles also well rewarded.

The data also highlights a clear link between performance and reward. While just over half of respondents received modest pay increases, nearly 30% reported no increase at all, suggesting a gap between expectations and outcomes. Meanwhile, nearly 39% expect bonuses between 11% and 25%, reinforcing a preference for performance-based compensation.

Expected Bonus as a Percentage of Basic Salary for the Current Financial Year

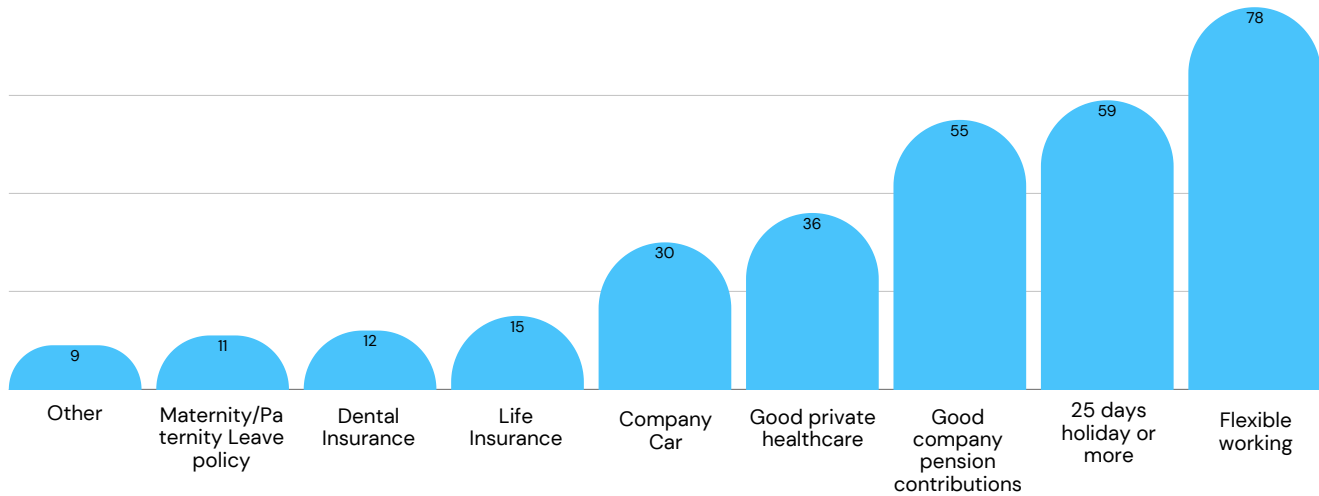


PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

Motivators for Career Moves and Valued Benefits

Our analysis shows that the majority of professionals would only consider changing roles for a salary increase of over 20%, with 35% indicating they would require a 21 to 30% uplift. This underscores the continued importance of financial reward as a key motivator, particularly in a cautious market that remains competitive within technology.

Key benefits considered when exploring a move to a new employer (multiple choice, up to 3 selections)



The accompanying graph highlights the benefits most valued when considering a move to a new employer. Flexible working tops the list, selected by 78 respondents, followed by 25 or more days of holiday and strong pension contributions. This suggests a clear preference for flexibility and core financial benefits over options like enhanced parental leave or dental insurance.

We asked respondents to select up to 3 reasons for leaving their previous employer



*Respondents could choose more than one answer

PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

Candidate Experience Across the Hiring Journey

These findings reveal clear patterns and opportunities for organisations to refine their recruitment strategies. This section explores candidates' experiences with interview stages, timelines, and communication touchpoints throughout the hiring process.

A majority of respondents (55%) believe that three to four interviews are ideal, while 36% prefer just one to two.** This suggests a strong preference for a structured yet efficient process that allows for meaningful engagement with stakeholders. Only 8.5% feel that more than five interviews are necessary.

****Respondents could choose up to 3 options**

Video interviews are the preferred format, selected by 88% of respondents, followed by face-to-face interviews at 65%. Less popular options such as telephone and panel formats reflect a continued shift towards more flexible and accessible methods.

Candidates also value the chance to ask their own questions, favouring a balanced and interactive interview experience.

We asked candidates how quickly they expect to receive feedback after an interview and compared it to their actual experience. Nearly half expect a response within one to three working days, yet only around a third receive it in that timeframe. Over 30% typically wait more than a week.

This gap underscores the importance of timely communication in shaping a positive and respectful candidate experience.

Word Cloud

We asked respondents to identify the most important topic to address during an interview.



PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

Permanent Salary Guide

General Area of Expertise- DACH	Salary
Analyst (Data, Business)	83,000-100,000
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	130,000-151,000
Cloud Engineer	86,000-103,000
Data Engineer	86,000-103,000
Data Scientist	95,001-111,667
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	90,001-105,000
Functional Consultant	107,144-126,429
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	153,253-169,175
Software Sales	141,787-153,215
Software Engineering	N/A
Average	138,969-154,974

General Area of Expertise- North America	Salary
Analyst (Data, Business)	95,450-115,000
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	150,000-174,000
Cloud Engineer	99,000-120,000
Data Engineer	99,000-120,000
Data Scientist	110,000-129,000
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	103,500-120,750
Functional Consultant	123,00-145,000
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	176,000-195,000
Software Sales	163,000-176,000
Software Engineering	N/A
Average	160,000-179,000

General Area of Expertise- Benelux	Salary
Analyst (Data, Business)	95,000 - 128,000
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	149,000 - 194,000
Cloud Engineer	99,000 - 132,000
Data Engineer	99,000 - 132,000
Data Scientist	109,000 - 144,000
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	104,000 - 135,000
Functional Consultant	123,000 - 162,000
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	176,000-195,000
Software Sales	163,000 - 196,000
Software Engineering	N/A
Average	160,000-199,000

****All salary ranges are listed in the local currency of the respondent's region.**

PERMANENT MARKET INSIGHTS

Permanent Salary Guide

General Area of Expertise– UK and Ireland	Salary
Analyst (Data, Business)	87,000 – 105,000
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	136,000 – 159,000
Cloud Engineer	90,000 – 108,000
Data Engineer	90,000 – 108,000
Data Scientist	100,000 – 117,000
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	95,000 – 110,000
Functional Consultant	113,000 – 133,000
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	161,000 – 178,000
Software Sales	149,000 – 161,000
Software Engineering	N/A
Average	146,000 – 163,000

****All salary ranges are listed in the local currency of the respondent's region.**

The insights presented in this report reflect a market in transition, where candidate expectations, compensation strategies, and hiring practices are evolving in response to economic pressures and shifting workforce priorities. From the growing emphasis on leadership and functional expertise to the rising importance of flexibility, performance-based rewards, and timely communication, the findings offer clear direction for organisations seeking to attract and retain top talent.

These results represent a snapshot of our respondent group, they provide valuable signals for shaping agile, people-centred talent strategies that align with both business needs and candidate expectations.

Richard Blackburn
Partner, Masentó Search

"We work on committed searches, qualify and place talent with our consultative follow-ups to ensure the successful integration of new Leaders."



FREELANCE INTRODUCTION



Over the last 12 months many organisations focused on stabilising operations, reducing costs and slowing the pace of new ERP implementations. However, strategic groundwork is being laid for future transformation projects, particularly around SAP S/4HANA migrations, cloud adoption, and process optimisation. Skilled ERP professionals remained in high demand as organisations prioritised system stabilisation, automation, and readiness for AI-driven capabilities.

Looking ahead, the outlook is more ambitious. Organisations are accelerating ERP initiatives, reframing them as business led transformations rather than purely technical upgrades. With end-of-life for ECC6 fast approaching, there's a significant uptick in greenfield S/4HANA implementations and upgrade activity.

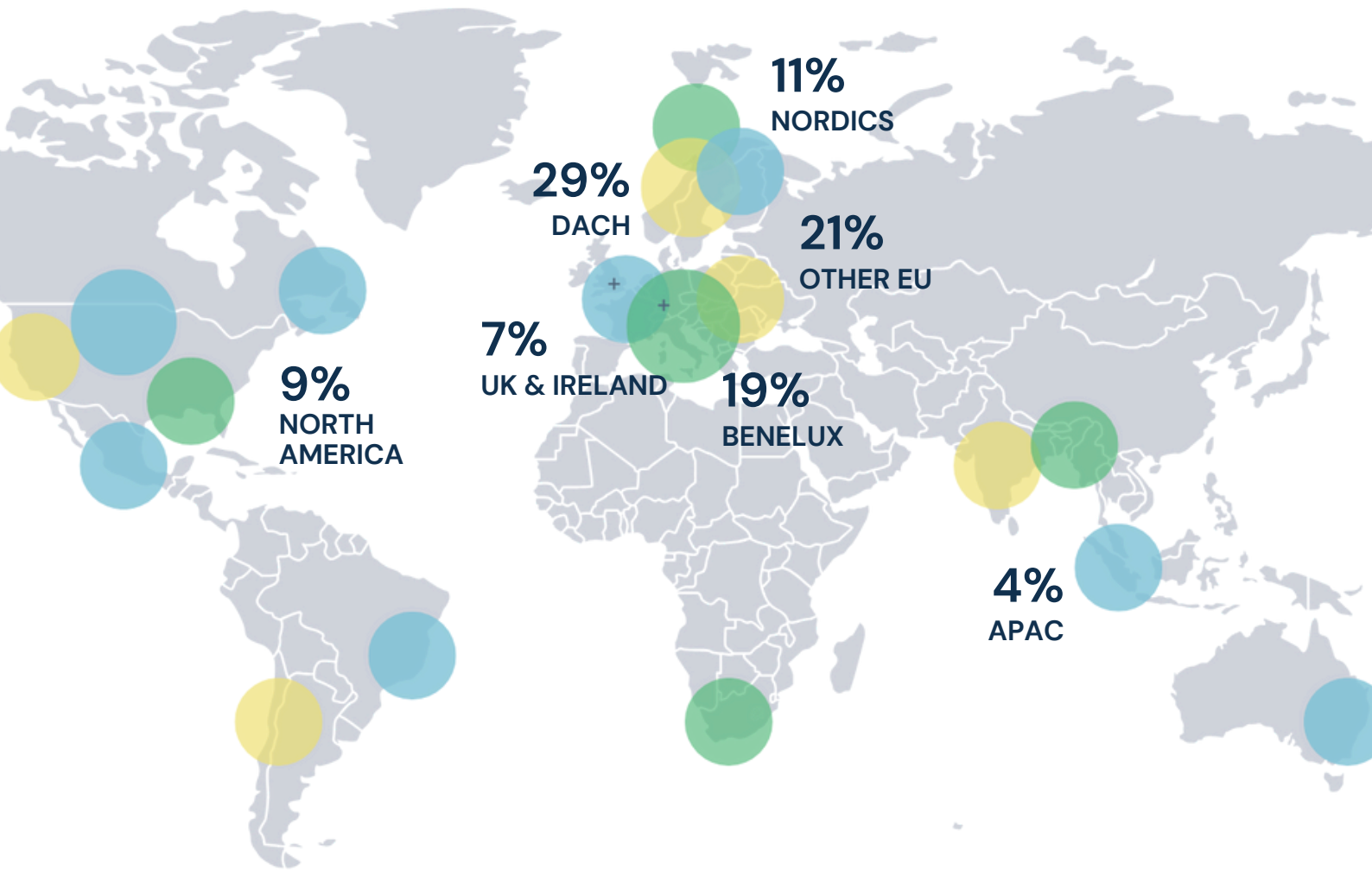
The integration of AI and automation into ERP systems is gaining momentum, increasing the need for freelance consultants with both functional and technical expertise in emerging technologies. Attracting top talent in this competitive market will require flexible hiring models, with hybrid and remote work playing a central role.

Through this section of the report, we hope to provide valuable year-on-year insights across freelance markets. We explore trends in skill set demand, hybrid working preferences, day rates, and industry specific demand.

DEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

Survey Scope and Focus

Our survey offers a data-driven analysis of the freelance talent market, with a primary focus on Europe, reflecting the regions where Masentó maintains the deepest market presence and operational footprint.



To assess the experience levels of our respondents, we asked how long they have been active in the freelance market.

Years Experience	%
1 -2 Years	20%
3-4 Years	15%
5-8 Years	10%
9+ Years	55%

Aaman Soni

European Practice Director, Masentó Group

"After a tentative year in terms of new implementations and upgrades, we are seeing signs that point to a dynamic 12 months ahead within the freelance market."



CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

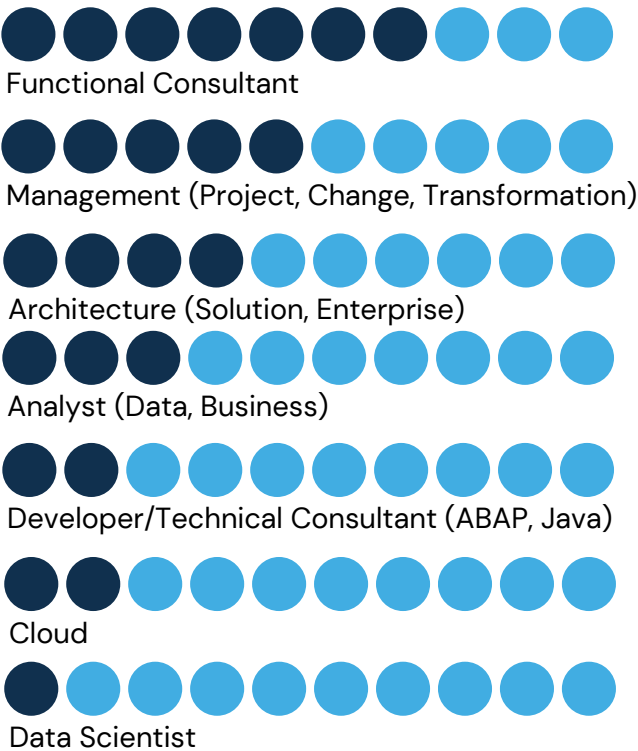
Freelancer Expertise Snapshot

Our latest survey highlights the depth and range of expertise within the freelance ecosystem.

Functional Consultants comprise the largest segment, followed by professionals in Management and Architecture. Analysts represent just over 15%, while specialists in Cloud and Data Science, though a smaller cohort, signal rising demand for next-generation capabilities.

This distribution underscores a strong alignment between freelance skillsets and evolving market priorities, spanning technology, strategy and digital innovation. Significantly, 80% of respondents identify SAP as their core platform, reflecting continued enterprise investment in resilient ERP infrastructure to support efficiency and adaptability amid economic uncertainty.

We asked our network to best describe their area of expertise



These patterns mirror broader macroeconomic imperatives, notably the emphasis on cost control and operational stability. While domains such as Data & AI and Cyber Security currently constitute a smaller share, they indicate growing momentum as digital transformation and regulatory complexity gather pace.

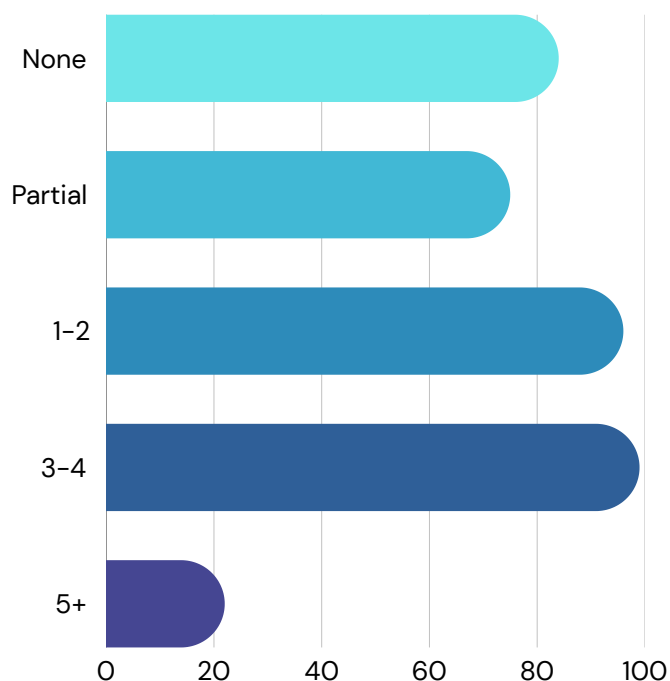
The 11% selecting 'Other' reflects increasing diversification, as freelancers shift towards niche and cross-sector roles, such as OMP and O9 in Supply Chain Planning, demonstrating the agility of independent talent in navigating emerging business needs.

CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Depth of SAP Expertise

The survey results highlight a freelance market rich in practical S/4HANA experience. While there is still a portion of the participants with none or only partial S/4 implementation involvement, over 65% indicated hands-on delivery experience, signalling the presence of seasoned consultants capable of driving complex, end-to-end transformations.

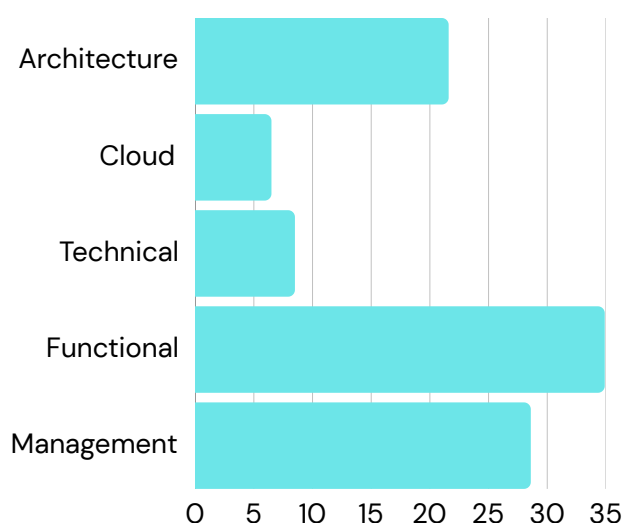
We asked our network their experience with S/4HANA Implementation



In contrast, the majority of consultants with no or limited implementation experience tend to come from engineering, support, and cloud-centric roles, many of whom are now entering the S/4HANA space as demand grows and transformation programs scale.

A closer look at the data from “areas of expertise” data, reveals that experienced consultants are most concentrated in functional and project leadership roles. Among those with 3–5+ implementations, 34.9% identify as Functional Consultants, followed by 28.6% in project, change, or transformation management. Architecture roles account for 21.6%.

We analysed our respondents with 3–5 S/4HANA implementation with their area of expertise



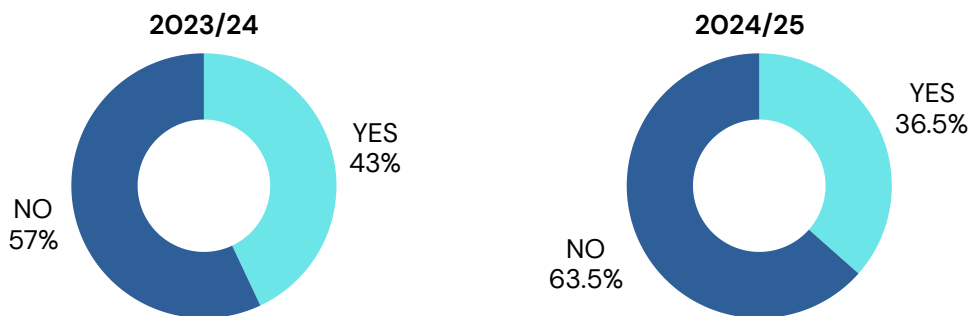
*Respondents could choose more than one answer

CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

IR35 Sentiment and Project Focus

Contractor willingness to accept inside IR35 roles continues to fall, with only 36.5% of UK-based freelancers open to such engagements in 2024/25, down from 43% last year. Firms reliant on contingent support for S/4HANA programmes will need to adapt their workforce strategies accordingly.

We asked UK based freelancers if they were happy to work inside IR35



Increased Freelancer Legislation across EU

We're seeing growing alignment across EU jurisdictions around stricter enforcement of employment classification rules. While each country maintains its own legal framework, the direction of travel is clear: greater scrutiny on freelance and contingent engagements. For organisations operating across borders, it is essential to seek country specific guidance to ensure compliance. At Masentó, we support clients in navigating these nuances, providing tailored advice to structure freelance engagements correctly and mitigate risk.

System Integrators and Shifting Client Sentiment

"Freelancer demand softened in early 2024, as many end-user clients delayed RFP processes and System Integrators focused on maximising utilisation of their internal bench. However, over the past six months we've seen clear signs of recovery, RFP volumes are picking up, and freelance hiring is steadily returning. The market is regaining confidence, with freelancer talent once again viewed as a strategic asset for driving transformation at pace."

Brendan Hession
Director, Masentó Group

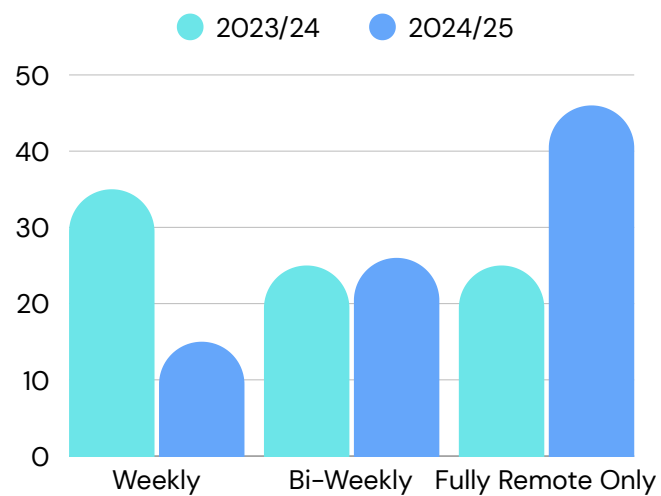


CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Freelance Flexibility and Work Patterns

As hybrid delivery models become the norm and international collaboration expands, freelance professionals are increasingly aligning their preferences toward flexibility and remote first engagement.

We asked our network how much onsite work they are happy to do



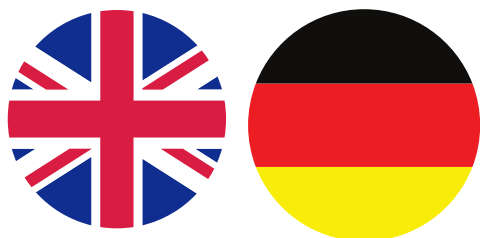
Our latest data shows a steep decline in willingness to work onsite weekly, dropping from 41% in 2023/24 to just 17% in 2024/25. Bi-weekly onsite arrangements held steady at 30%, while the proportion of freelancers favouring fully remote roles nearly doubled, rising from 29% to 53%.

This shift reflects growing demand for autonomy and digital delivery across geographies. Clients offering fully remote work can access a broader talent pool at more competitive rates.

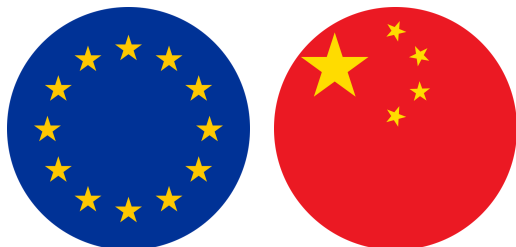
Geographically, freelancers in the UK and Germany remain the most open to onsite work, while respondents from EU and APAC regions show a strong preference for remote only arrangements.

Onsite vs. Remote Work Preferences by Region (2024/25)

Full Time – Location



Fully Remote – Location



Aaman Soni

European Practice Director, Masentó Group

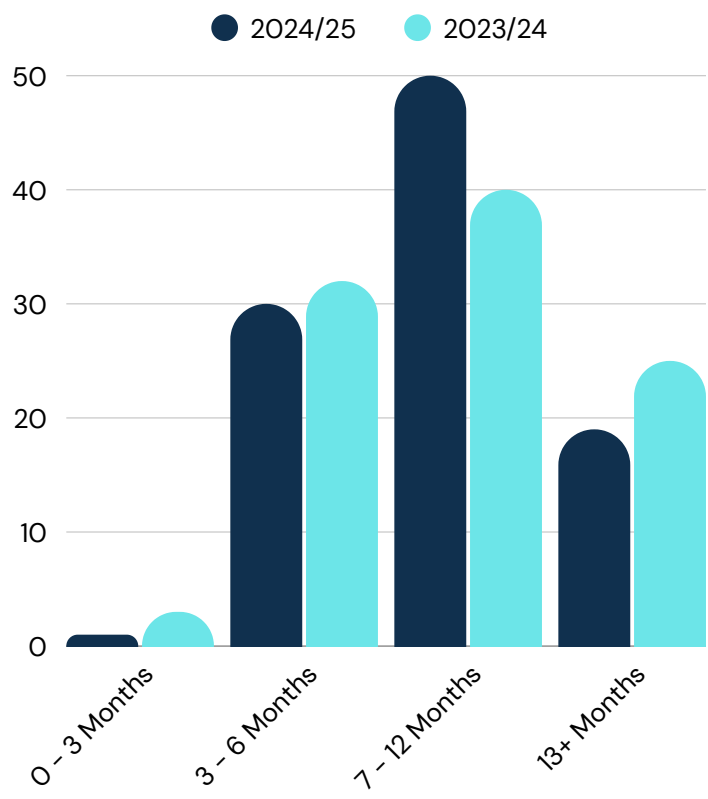
“The UK and Germany remain high-cost talent markets, where clients often expect onsite presence to justify premium rates, especially with lower-cost remote options available. The cost-versus-presence trade-off is key discussion amongst senior leaders”



CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Contract Duration Trends: A Shift Toward Medium Term Certainty

We asked our respondents what is the typical length of contract they are being offered

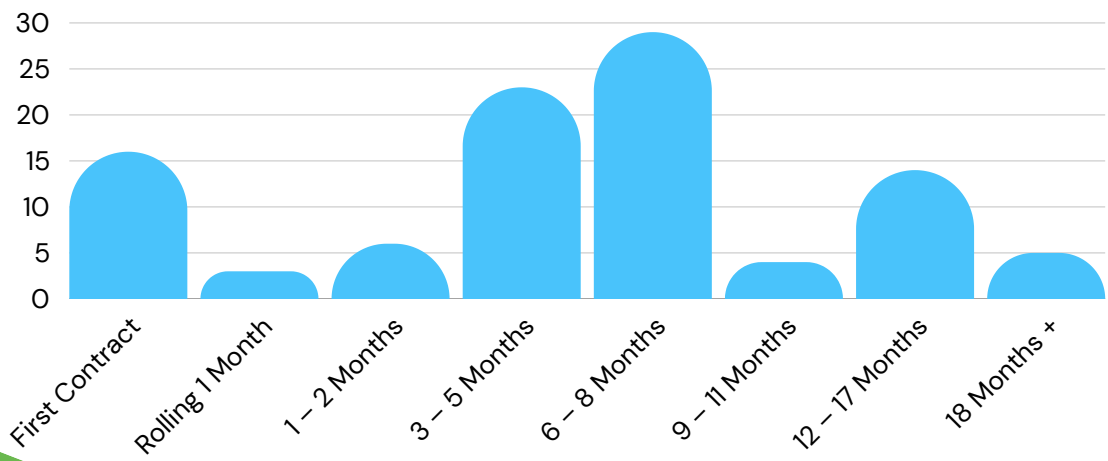


Freelance contract lengths are stabilising in the mid-to long-term range, reflecting cautious optimism among employers.

In 2024/25, the majority of new contracts fall within the 7 to 12 month window (50%), up from 40% in the prior year, while short-term contracts (0 to 3 months) continue to decline and those over 13 months remain steady.

Most freelancers report receiving medium-term extensions, with 6 to 8 months being the most common (29%), followed by 3 to 5 months (23%), suggesting a market leaning toward greater continuity and project stability.

We asked our respondents the length of extension they most recently received?



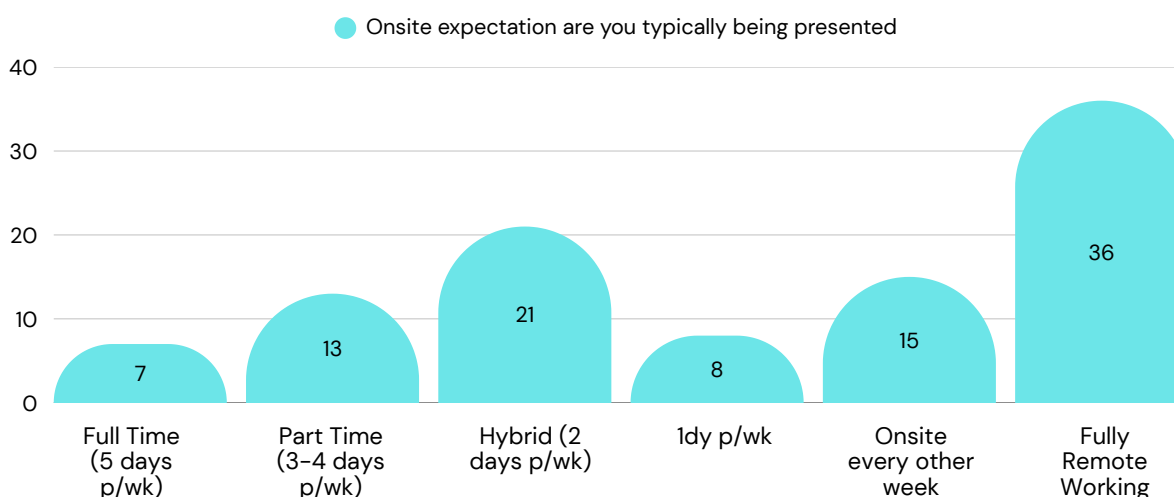
CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Freelancers Embrace Remote-First, Clients Play Catch Up

As hybrid delivery models become embedded across transformation programmes, freelance professionals are increasingly gravitating toward flexible and remote-first working arrangements.

Appetite for weekly onsite work has dropped sharply, from 41% in 2023/24 to 17% in 2024/25, while preference for fully remote roles rose to 53%. Biweekly onsite engagement remained relatively stable, seen as a workable compromise between client expectations and consultant autonomy.

We asked our talent pool what onsite expectations they are willing to commit to in comparison to what they are currently being presented with.



The data highlights a clear mismatch: full time onsite roles are least attractive, while fully remote and light touch hybrid setups are far more appealing to the freelance workforce. Two days onsite per week appears to be the strongest point of alignment between freelancer preferences and client expectations, potentially signalling the new baseline for hybrid models.

Overall, the shift toward autonomy and flexible location models is unmistakable. Clients that adopt remote-first or light-hybrid approaches may gain a strategic edge in accessing and retaining top-tier freelance talent across the SAP and wider transformation space.

CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Contract Salary Guide

General Area of Expertise– APAC	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	360–480
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	680–800
Cloud	577–720
Data Scientist	N/A
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	721–576
Functional Consultant	721–672
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	601–720
Average	625–634

General Area of Expertise– Benelux	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	1033–1152
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	1116–1160
Cloud	960–1201
Data Scientist	N/A
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	1561
Functional Consultant	951–1070
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	1180–1011
Average	1038–1096

General Area of Expertise– DACH	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	1051–1123
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	1023–1092
Cloud	900–1020
Data Scientist	1020–1140
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	1017–1096
Functional Consultant	1063–1108
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	1119–1128
Average	1062–1106

CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Contract Salary Guide

General Area of Expertise- LATAM	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	721-8401
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	N/A
Cloud	N/A
Data Scientist	N/A
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	N/A
Functional Consultant	691-810
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	734-1080
Average	734-853

General Area of Expertise- Nordics	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	1201-1320
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	1124-1243
Cloud	721-840
Data Scientist	N/A
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	901-1020
Functional Consultant	1081-1200
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	1105-1110
Average	1090-1184

General Area of Expertise- North America	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	901-1020
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	921-1040
Cloud	1081-1200
Data Scientist	N/A
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	481-600
Functional Consultant	926-1045
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	950-1069
Average	922-1041

General Area of Expertise- Other EU countries	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	775-894
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	862-955
Cloud	798-916
Data Scientist	841-960
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	684-802
Functional Consultant	783-902
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	853-943
Average	853-972

****All day rates are listed in the local currency of the respondent's region.**

CONTRACT MARKET INSIGHTS

Contract Salary Guide

General Area of Expertise– UK & Ireland	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	789–908
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	943–1062
Cloud	1111–1230
Data Scientist	841–960
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	931–1050
Functional Consultant	806–925
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	817–936
Average	853–972

General Area of Expertise– Inside IR35	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	820–960
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	1009–1152
Cloud	1153–1296
Data Scientist	1009–1152
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	961–1080
Functional Consultant	644–763
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	751–870
Average	726–844

General Area of Expertise– Outside IR35	Day Rate
Analyst (Data, Business)	871–990
Architecture (Solution, Enterprise)	973–1092
Cloud	1201–1320
Data Scientist	N/A
Developer/Technical Consultant (ABAP, Java)	920–1040
Functional Consultant	912–1030
Management (Project, Change, Transformation)	858–980
Average	926–1045

CLOSING STATEMENTS

The future of the industry

The freelance talent market is entering a new phase of strategic relevance. As economic confidence improves, organisations are shifting toward longer contracts that prioritise capability, continuity and knowledge retention, especially to support complex transformation programmes.

At the same time, location flexibility is now a top priority for high calibre freelancers. Businesses that embrace hybrid or remote-first models will gain a clear advantage in attracting in demand talent, often at lower costs. Today's freelance workforce is not just supporting change — it is leading it.

Aaman Soni
European Practice Director

"Today's freelance workforce isn't just supporting change, it's leading it. As organisations evolve, those who embrace flexibility and partner with freelancers as strategic enablers will stay ahead."



This report highlights a market in transition, where evolving candidate expectations and economic pressures are reshaping the landscape of permanent hiring. While job security and salary growth have shown signs of strain, the continued demand for leadership, functional expertise, and flexible working models signals a shift toward more adaptive and value driven employment strategies.

Looking ahead, organisations that embrace agility, invest in performance based rewards, and prioritise transparent, candidate centric hiring processes will be best positioned to lead. As technology, data, and workforce expectations continue to evolve, the future of the industry will belong to those who align talent strategies with both business goals and the changing needs of professionals.

Richard Blackburn
Partner, Masentó Search

"As the market continues to evolve, organisations that adapt to shifting candidate expectations and prioritise flexibility, performance, and communication will be best positioned to attract and retain talent."





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