

Q1 MARKET UPDATE

Technology

Q1 Overview

Technology hiring has started the year with modest momentum compared to the end of 2025, as budgets reopen and hiring processes resume following the typical year-end slowdown.

Vacancy volumes have increased slightly since Q4, particularly across cyber security, robotics engineering, and cyber sales roles. However, hiring remains more measured than during earlier high-growth cycles, with businesses focusing on targeted recruitment rather than broad team expansion.

Most activity is replacement hiring rather than aggressive headcount growth, as organisations prioritise maintaining critical technical capabilities while selectively investing in areas that support automation, cyber resilience, and revenue growth.

Geographically, hiring momentum continues to diverge. The US remains more active, particularly across AI infrastructure, data platforms, and application security roles, while hiring across the UK and Europe is recovering more gradually amid ongoing economic caution.

Demand Trends

Demand remains strongest for mid-level to senior professionals who can deliver impact quickly. Employers are prioritising experienced individuals able to contribute to complex projects with minimal onboarding.

In cyber security, the fastest interview-to-offer timelines are for Cloud Security Engineers, Security Architects, Threat Intelligence and Incident Response specialists, and Application Security or DevSecOps professionals. Cybersecurity remains one of the most resilient hiring areas due to ongoing regulatory pressure and rising security threats. Last year's benchmarks showed mid-level Security Engineers and Cloud Security Engineers typically earning \$105,000-\$140,000, rising to \$140,000-\$165,000 at senior level, reflecting the continued premium on security expertise.

In robotics, demand is being driven by automation initiatives across manufacturing and AI-enabled systems. Companies are prioritising robotics software engineers (ROS, Python, C++), alongside specialists in computer vision, embedded systems, and autonomy engineering.

Cyber sales hiring has also strengthened as security vendors focus on revenue growth following slower

investment cycles. Demand is strongest for Enterprise Account Executives, Channel Managers, and Pre-Sales or Sales Engineers with technical security expertise.

While permanent hiring remains dominant, contract hiring is increasingly used for cyber transformation programmes, robotics development, and specialist security projects.

Newly created roles are emerging primarily within robotics and AI-driven security teams, although most vacancies remain replacement hires rather than large-scale expansion.

Compensation

Following several years of rapid salary growth across the technology sector, compensation levels are largely stabilising.

Cyber security continues to command a premium compared with the broader market. Data from 2025 showed cyber roles typically earning around 12% more than comparable IT positions, reflecting the strategic importance of security expertise.

However, salary growth itself has moderated compared with previous years. Employers are increasingly disciplined around salary banding and internal benchmarking, ensuring offers remain competitive while maintaining consistency across teams.

Senior cyber specialists and experienced robotics engineers still command strong offers, particularly when they bring expertise in areas such as cloud security, AI security, or robotics autonomy. For these niche skill sets, employers remain willing to stretch compensation to secure the right talent.

Counteroffers are also becoming more common in cyber security roles as organisations attempt to retain professionals with critical institutional knowledge.

Candidate Behaviour

Behaviour in Q1 reflects a more cautious and selective market compared with previous high-growth periods.

Many professionals remain open to exploring opportunities but are prioritising stability and long-term career prospects when evaluating potential moves. Key decision factors currently include job security, leadership quality, organisational growth prospects, and flexible working arrangements.

Flexible working continues to play a major role in decision-making. Data collected last year showed that 72% of UK and 55% of US technology professionals prioritise flexible working arrangements when choosing an employer, highlighting the continued importance of hybrid policies in attracting talent.

Talent supply has increased at the junior level, particularly within cyber security as more graduates and career-switchers enter the market. However, professionals with five or more years of experience in cyber security, cloud infrastructure, or robotics engineering remain significantly harder to secure.

Senior talent tends to be more selective when considering new roles. Meanwhile, mid-level professionals (particularly those three to five years into their careers) are more actively exploring opportunities that offer progression into senior technical or leadership positions.

Burnout is also emerging as a driver of movement, particularly within security operations teams where workloads remain high.

Hiring Process Trends

Hiring processes are becoming more structured but slightly slower than candidates would ideally prefer.

Average time-to-offer has increased modestly in many organisations due to additional internal approvals, budget checks before final offers, and greater stakeholder involvement in hiring decisions.

Roles most likely to stall during hiring processes tend to be newly created positions where the scope is still evolving, particularly in emerging robotics or AI-driven security roles.

The organisations securing the strongest talent are typically those that keep processes efficient and transparent, limiting hiring processes to two or three interview stages, providing rapid feedback, and clearly communicating the strategic importance of the role.

When organisations move quickly and present a compelling career proposition, offer acceptance rates remain strong.

Q2 Outlook

Looking ahead to Q2, competition for specialised technical talent is expected to intensify.

Skills likely to become harder to secure include cloud security architecture, AI and machine learning security, robotics autonomy and perception engineering, and cybersecurity pre-sales specialists with enterprise sales experience.

Cyber security, robotics automation, and AI-enabled technologies are expected to remain key drivers of hiring activity as organisations continue investing in digital transformation and operational resilience.

For hiring leaders planning ahead of demand, speed and clarity will remain critical. Organisations that delay hiring decisions risk losing top talent to faster-moving competitors.

KEY TRENDS



Hiring activity is recovering, but cautiously



Cyber security and robotics continue to drive demand



Mid-senior talent remains the hardest to secure



Compensation growth is stabilising



Professionals are prioritising stability and flexibility