A year into the pandemic, most organisations in the Philippines have adapted to new ways of working, with flexible work arrangements becoming the norm for many. The Technology job market, especially the Application Development, Cloud & Infrastructure and Data Analytics segments, in the country similarly showed signs of a pick-up in hiring activity in the first half of the year.

As we enter the second half of 2021, we expect a steady pace in hiring and more job opportunities being made available across various industries in the Philippines. This comes on the back of a wider roll-out of the country's vaccination programme and greater confidence from consumers and businesses in their communities and the economy.

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND IT SECURITY SECTORS

How would you describe the recruitment market for your sector(s)? Have there been any changes?

■ For Application Development, while we have observed more jobs being opened in the financial start-up industry, the recruitment market has definitely become more aggressive compared to last year. Moreover, majority of companies are still opting to utilise their internal Talent Acquisition teams, and would only approach external agencies for niche or longstanding roles.

■ For Infrastructure roles, companies in the Philippines have seen the need to expand this function, leading to continuous hiring of infrastructure professionals across all industries. However, organisations are turning more selective, and prefer to hire professionals who can multi-hat to add more value to their business.

■ For roles in IT security, hiring activity is still slow-going, as most companies are only hiring to backfill vacant positions; some hiring freezes are still in place to avoid laying off employees or as part of businesses' cost-cutting measures. Some organisations have also resorted to IT-managed services companies for support in Cybersecurity, IT Operations, Technical support, Helpdesk, etc. Companies have also become more rigid in terms of hiring requirements due to budget constraints, with hiring managers often requiring solid and relevant technical skills from job applicants.

Who is hiring and what jobs are they hiring for?

■ Companies in insurance, financial services, technology and telecommunications are still hiring. Some small to medium start-up firms have also been open to partnering with vendors to work on roles and also leverage on branding opportunities.

■ In the financial services sector, local companies are hiring more aggressively compared to multinational companies

■ Previously, technology risk and IT audit are mostly conducted for compliance but nowadays, organisations need to find ways to mitigate risks and think about how to build their organisation's resiliency

■ In-demand roles under Applications Development are Fullstack Developers on Node.JS, React JS and Angular, .Net Developer, C++ Developer, Mobile Developer for both iOS and Android, Solutions Architect and Automation QA Engineer

■ For Infrastructure, in-demand roles consist of Cloud Architects, Network Engineers and Architects, Voice Engineers, DevOps and DevSecOps, and Head of IT
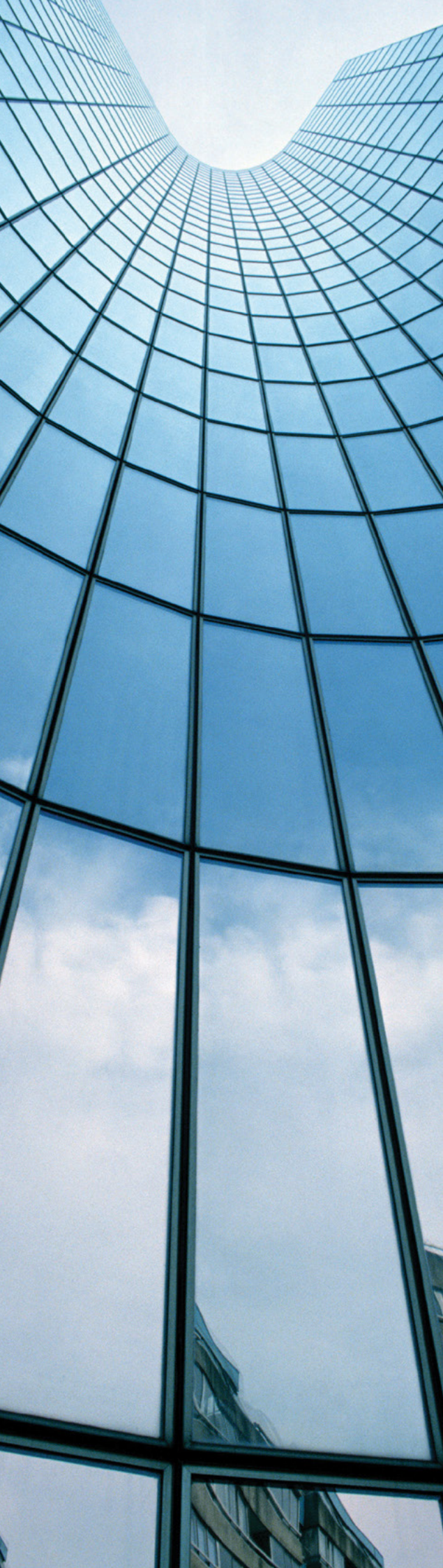
PROJECTS AND PRODUCT MANAGEMENT, ENTERPRISE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGY SALES SECTORS

How would you describe the recruitment market for your sector(s)? Are there any changes?

■ Hiring activity in Tech Sales have remained slow this year, although there have been some improvements compared to last year.

■ Hiring for Project Management roles has been consistent, as both IT software and infrastructure projects are on-going elements for enterprise companies doing digital transformation, as well as IT Solutioning companies supporting their clients.

■ ERP, Data and Analytics roles on the other hand, have remained as a niche market, as companies are looking for newer technologies to support global technology projects. However there has been an upward trend in hiring, as both local and multinational businesses need talent experienced with end-to-end implementations.

■ More companies are increasingly open to hiring individuals outside the city, given the possibility of remote working. Professionals with the right skillsets, especially for those hard-to-find roles, have more bargaining power.

Who is hiring and what jobs are they hiring for?

■ There is high demand of tech professionals in the following industries: Telco, New Entrants and established SaaS Companies, Enterprise companies, Conglomerates, and IT Solutioning/Services

■ Various CPO (Clinical Process outsourcing) companies are hiring in the Philippines in light of the pandemic, since more engagements between doctors/ healthcare professionals and patients are now scheduled online.

■ SAP still tops the job market in terms of hiring with S/4 HANA being a hot skill. There are however still opportunities for professionals with niche skillsets, such as Oracle Database Administrators, NetSuite, and Microsoft Dynamics Functional Consultants. Top industries hiring include FMCG, IT Solutions and Consulting, Online Digital/E-Commerce, and Financial Services.

■ There has been great interest for Data Engineers with hands-on experience in Microsoft Azure Analytics. Data Science continues to be a much sought-after space in Analytics, as most Data Analysts take on projects and courses to upskill, or have a high-level understanding and exposure to the technical stack involved in being a Data Scientist. Top industries hiring include Banking and Financial Services, Insurance, IT Solutions, and E-Commerce.

Aside from offering excellent compensation and benefits, here are other factors to consider in attracting and retaining top talent:

■ **Clear and open communication.** Organisations must establish the stability of their business by communicating clearly and being transparent on how the business is doing. Expectations must be set from the start to ensure the longevity of the candidate in the role. 45% of candidates look at colleagues and a positive culture whenever considering moving to another job.

■ **Flexible Work Arrangements.** Employees and jobseekers alike see this as a major consideration given the uncertainties in the current climate. Companies will have to start managing a hybrid workplace, and find ways to maintain high productivity levels despite this hybrid set up. Work-life balance is now one of the top considerations for a candidate to move to another organization where 71% of them would like to have a clear understanding about the role and the demands of the job they'll move into.

■ **Opportunities for training and career development.** Most candidates aim for job security and providing a clear development path for them is a key retaining factor. Professionals tend to be careful in moving to another job especially in these trying times. Promotions and certification or educational sponsorships from employers may also entice them in staying.

■ **Creative talent search.** Organisations must strongly consider hiring talent based on potential given that no professional skillset is completely futureproof. Hiring talent who can grow and develop into more complex roles will help the business as it continues to evolve.

What recruitment practices will help drive a more effective hiring process?

■ **Reduce time to hire.** Most candidates have two to three other ongoing job applications, and decisions are sometimes made based on which company offers first. It is vital that companies be able to reduce time from interview to offer to avoid losing out to more flexible competitors.

■ **Bring hiring processes online.** Conducting online interviews can help speed up the hiring process. Set onboarding requirements to a minimum number, and be prepared to onboard remotely to ensure the recruitment timetable is met accordingly. Also, be flexible with the deadline for submission of documents, as it is still a challenge to go around securing clearances from different government offices.

■ **Work with recruitment experts.** Organisations must be open to working with recruiters to help create a strategic approach in attracting both passive and active jobseekers, as this is one key approach to speed up the process of finding ideal candidates for the role.

For more expert advice on attracting the right talent and managing the hiring process in these unprecedented times, **contact us** for a confidential discussion on your hiring needs, and visit our dedicated **Hiring Advice hub.**