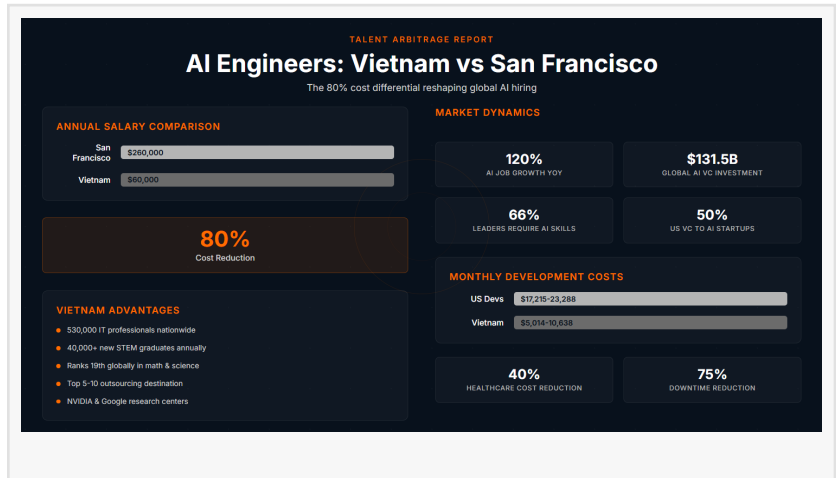


Why companies are hiring AI engineers in Vietnam for \$60,000 instead of San Francisco for \$260,000

New report reveals Vietnamese AI engineers deliver comparable quality to San Francisco talent at \$60,000 vs \$260,000 annually.

SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE, September 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Machine learning engineers in San Francisco command median salaries of \$260,000, often exceeding \$350,000 with total compensation. Meanwhile, equally skilled developers in Vietnam earn \$60,000 annually for senior positions.



As AI job postings surge 120% year-over-year and venture capital pours \$131.5 billion into AI startups globally, this 80% cost differential is driving a fundamental shift in how companies build their AI teams.

The economics of AI talent arbitrage:

The numbers are stark: 66% of business leaders now refuse to hire candidates without AI skills, according to Microsoft and LinkedIn's 2024 Work Trend Index. With AI roles commanding up to 56% wage premiums in the US market and over 66,000 job postings requiring generative AI skills, the talent crunch has reached crisis levels.

Nearly 50% of all North American venture capital now flows to AI startups, intensifying competition for a limited talent pool. This perfect storm of demand and constrained supply has created an unprecedented opportunity for talent arbitrage. Top startups leveraging companies like SecondTalent are discovering that Vietnamese AI engineers trained in TensorFlow, PyTorch, and modern LLM frameworks deliver comparable output at 50-70% lower costs.

The quality isn't theoretical, FPT Software, Vietnam's largest IT services company, serves Fortune 500 clients across 27 countries with its 4,000+ engineers, while VNG Corporation has developed

a Vietnamese ChatGPT competitor serving 75 million users.

Vietnam's hidden AI powerhouse:

Vietnam's tech ecosystem has quietly scaled to 530,000 IT professionals, with 40,000+ new STEM graduates entering the workforce annually. The country jumped 21 positions in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index to rank 75th globally, excelling particularly in math and science skills where it ranks 19th worldwide.

More importantly, Vietnam consistently places in the top 5-10 global outsourcing destinations, with proven capabilities in AI/ML development, computer vision, and natural language processing.

The educational foundation is solid. Vietnamese universities produce engineers proficient in Python, TensorFlow, and cutting-edge AI frameworks, while the government's National AI Strategy targets becoming a top-50 global AI hub by 2030. English proficiency among tech workers has reached "an all-time high," with urban tech hubs achieving 50-60% proficiency rates. Major players like NVIDIA and Google have established AI research centers in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, validating the local talent quality.

Real companies, real results:

The arbitrage opportunity isn't just theoretical. A US healthcare startup reduced AI modeling costs by 40% while accelerating deployment by two months through Vietnamese partnerships. An American fintech company achieved 50% cost savings while reducing system downtime by 75%.

These aren't outliers, TMA Solutions, with 27 years of experience and CMMI Level 5 certification, maintains 95% project retention rates across 30+ countries.

SecondTalent's proprietary skill assessment data reveals that Vietnamese AI engineers consistently match or exceed quality benchmarks set by their US counterparts in technical evaluations.

The platform's analysis of thousands of AI engineer profiles shows Vietnamese developers scoring within 5% of US engineers on complex algorithm challenges while billing at \$5,014-10,638 monthly compared to \$17,215-23,288 for US developers. This isn't about compromising quality, it's about recognizing that talent distribution doesn't respect geographic boundaries.

The strategic imperative:

With AI job postings growing 3.5 times faster than all other jobs and representing 2% of all US positions, the traditional hiring playbook is broken. Companies clinging to location-based recruiting face an impossible equation: compete for scarce local talent at premium prices or risk

falling behind in the AI race. The 17.7% salary premium for AI roles in the US compounds this challenge, making every hire a significant financial commitment.

Forward-thinking companies are instead building distributed AI teams that blend US-based architects with Vietnamese implementation specialists. This hybrid model preserves strategic control while achieving 90% cost savings on execution-heavy development work. The 14-hour time difference becomes an advantage, enabling 24-hour development cycles that accelerate product timelines.

The arbitrage window is closing:

Vietnam's AI salaries are rising 15-20% annually as global demand intensifies. The arbitrage opportunity that exists today, hiring senior AI engineers for \$60,000 instead of \$260,000, won't last forever. Companies that move now, leveraging platforms like secondtalent.com to assess and access this talent pool, gain both immediate cost advantages and long-term strategic positioning in the global AI talent market.

The question isn't whether to explore global AI talent, it's whether you'll act before your competitors do.

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