

Second Talent Outlines Five Shifts Reshaping Tech Hiring by 2030

With 85 million skilled workers in short supply and \$8.5 trillion at stake, the companies building global talent infra today will dominate the next decade.

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By 2030, the global economy will be short 85 million skilled workers. The tech industry alone faces an \$8.5 trillion revenue gap if talent shortages persist.

Yet the companies that will thrive in this environment aren't waiting. They're building distributed engineering teams across Asia today. Second Talent, a global talent platform and Employer of Record service operating across nine Asian markets, is helping forward-thinking companies prepare for a hiring that looks radically different from today's.



"The question isn't whether your company will hire globally by 2030," said Elton Chan, Co-Founder of Second Talent. "The question is whether you'll lead that transition or be forced into it by competitors who moved faster."

The 2030 Talent Landscape: Five Structural Shifts

1. The developer shortage becomes permanent.

The U.S. will be short 1.2 million software engineers by the end of 2026, a gap that shows no signs of closing. By 2030, Korn Ferry projects 85.2 million unfilled tech positions globally.

Contributing factors are accelerating. Roughly 18% of senior developers born between 1970 and 1980 plan retirement before 2027. Junior developer hiring has collapsed to just 7% of new tech hires.

AI demand requires three times more ML engineers than currently exist. U.S. computer science programs produce only 65,000 graduates annually against demand for more than 180,000 AI-

capable engineers.

2. Immigration becomes economically unviable for most employers.

The new \$100,000 H-1B visa fee, effective September 2025, combined with a weighted lottery system favoring higher-wage positions, has fundamentally changed the calculus of U.S.-based hiring.

At current fee levels, sponsoring 55 H-1B workers costs \$5.5 million annually before salaries. For startups and mid-sized companies, this pathway is now closed. Meanwhile, 71% of H-1B visas historically went to Indian nationals. The talent hasn't disappeared. It's simply being hired elsewhere.

3. Employer of Record infrastructure becomes standard.

The global EOR market reached \$5.59 billion in 2025 and is projected to exceed \$10 billion by 2033. Asia-Pacific represents the fastest-growing region at 17% annual growth.

Already 41% of companies use EOR services for international hiring, and another 49% plan to start. Among companies planning international expansion, 87% cite compliance as their top challenge.

Those using EOR report 55% reduction in onboarding time and 40% boost in workforce productivity.

4. Remote-first becomes the only competitive model.

By 2030, office-centric hiring will be a competitive disadvantage. Some 87% of tech companies now hire globally for remote positions.

Remote-first companies report 23% higher employee retention and access talent pools five times larger than office-centric competitors. Meanwhile, 74% of developers prefer companies offering remote options.

5. Asia emerges as the primary talent reservoir.

More than half of tech companies plan to increase [hiring in Asia](#) markets in 2026 alone. The reasons are structural.

These markets offer deep pools of English-proficient, technically skilled developers. Time zone coverage enables true 24-hour development cycles. Compensation runs 40-70% lower than U.S. equivalents at comparable quality. Specialization in AI and ML is growing rapidly in markets like Taiwan, Vietnam, and India. Remote work infrastructure matured dramatically post-pandemic.

The Cost of Waiting

Companies that delay building global talent infrastructure face compounding disadvantages.

A [senior AI engineer](#) in the Bay Area costs \$250,000 to \$350,000 in base salary plus equity today. By 2030, that figure will likely exceed \$400,000 base plus equity.

H-1B sponsorship currently runs \$100,000 in fees plus roughly \$15,000 in legal costs, with future policy entirely uncertain. The average time to fill an AI or ML role stands at 89 days today and is projected to exceed 120 days by 2030.

The companies moving now secure first-mover access to top-tier talent before competition intensifies. They build institutional knowledge of managing distributed teams and lock in salary benchmarks before regional wage inflation erodes the advantage.

How Second Talent Prepares Companies for 2030

Second Talent operates as a full-service Employer of Record across nine Asian markets: Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, China, India, and Hong Kong.

On speed, Second Talent delivers pre-vetted tech talent within 24 hours. While competitors spend 89 days filling AI roles, Second Talent clients are already shipping code.

On compliance, the company provides full legal employment in each jurisdiction, handling payroll, taxes, benefits, and termination locally. No entity setup required. No misclassification risk.

On quality, Second Talent applies rigorous vetting for technical skills, English proficiency, and remote work readiness. While 84% of companies report skills gaps, Second Talent clients don't face this problem.

On scale, companies can hire one engineer or build a 50-person team across multiple markets. Flexibility to expand or contract based on business needs with no long-term facility commitments.

The Companies Already Preparing

Early adopters share common characteristics.

Series A through C startups are extending runway by looking to [hire developers in Vietnam](#) rather than competing for Bay Area talent at \$400,000 or more in fully loaded costs.

Enterprise tech companies are establishing Asia-Pacific development centers without 18-month entity setup timelines. AI-focused firms are accessing ML engineering talent that U.S. universities simply aren't producing in sufficient quantity.

A recent Blind survey found that 38% of tech professionals report their companies are replacing U.S.-based roles with Asia-based hiring. The shift is happening whether individual companies participate or not.

Preparing for 2030 Starts Now

Second Talent recommends companies take four immediate steps.

First, audit location dependency. Map every role and identify which require physical presence.

For the rest, typically 70-90% of engineering functions, your talent pool just expanded to billions.

Second, build compliance infrastructure. EOR relationships, international payroll processes, and cross-border management capabilities take months to establish. Start before you need them.

Third, pilot distributed hiring. Begin with two or three roles in a single market. Learn what works before scaling. The institutional knowledge compounds over time.

Fourth, rethink compensation philosophy. Geographic pay differentials are already controversial. Build frameworks that can evolve toward output-based models as global salary expectations converge.

About Second Talent

Second Talent is a global talent platform and Employer of Record service connecting companies with AI-skilled developers across Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, China, India, and Hong Kong. The company delivers pre-vetted tech talent within 24 hours, manages cross-border payroll and compliance, and enables companies to build world-class engineering teams without visa constraints or entity setup.

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