

# 3Search Group's 2026 Annual Pay & Hiring Report Reveals 62% of Employees Are Looking to Exit

*New 3Search research shows 62% of professionals are eyeing the exit in 2026 as workloads rise, pay stalls, and culture becomes the deciding factor.*

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On paper, the hiring market

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Salary remains the top motivator for 40% of employees, but pay alone no longer closes the deal. Candidates are digging deeper into culture and progression before they ever sign a contract.”

*Andy Sellers, Co-Founder of  
3Search Group*

looks calm. Businesses are seeing fewer job postings and tighter budgets, leading many leadership teams to assume their people are staying put. The data suggests otherwise. The newly released [3Search 2026 Annual Pay & Hiring Report](#), built on responses from more than 1,400 professionals, finds 62% of marketing, sales, and digital professionals are considering a move this year. Nearly two thirds of the workforce is already weighing up its options.

Why So Many Professionals Are Ready to Move:

The report points to three forces behind the numbers: rising workloads, slower salary growth, and changing expectations around progression and day-to-day working

life. Workload has quietly become one of the biggest push factors, with most teams asked to do more on flat headcount.

Pay is the second pressure. Office for National Statistics figures show real regular pay grew by just 0.1% in the three months to April 2026 after inflation. A pay rise that barely covers the weekly shop keeps nobody loyal, so people go looking for the increase their employer cannot offer.

The third runs deeper. Flexible working is standard now, so professionals are asking whether they can see a genuine path upwards and whether work fits around their lives. When either answer is no, a good offer from elsewhere is hard to turn down.

How Hiring Has Shifted from Volume to Value:

Employers have not stopped hiring. The report finds 52% plan to recruit in 2026, though most have swapped broad expansion for fewer roles with a direct line to revenue and growth.

It leaves both sides squeezed. Candidates are asking for more just as budgets have the least room to give, so each hire carries more risk than it did a year ago.

Andy Sellers, Co-Founder of 3Search, said: "The 62% figure should be a wake-up call. Employers who assume a quieter market means a loyal workforce are misreading the moment. The best people are not waiting for job boards to fill up again. They are being approached directly, and they are listening."

#### Key Employee Retention Drivers:

Salary still comes first for people weighing a move, ranked top by over 40% of professionals. With pay growth stabilising, though, candidates are looking much harder at fairness and company culture, which has climbed sharply year on year, as 3Search unpacks in its look at [2026 recruitment trends](#).

Skill demands are moving too. Employers now expect practical, hands-on AI ability rather than a bonus, yet 30% say their biggest recruitment headache is working out who is genuinely qualified, pushing soft skills such as problem-solving and communication up the list.

Sellers added: "Competitive pay gets you into the conversation, but it no longer wins it. Candidates are asking harder questions about how teams actually work, and the employers with honest answers are the ones keeping their people."

None of this points to a frozen market. It points to a considered one, where keeping good people comes down to setting expectations honestly, paying fairly, and building a culture that survives a candidate's due diligence.

#### About 3Search:

[3Search Group](#) is a specialist recruitment agency supporting high-growth organisations with talent acquisition across marketing, sales, product, digital, and revenue operations. With offices in London and New York, the firm partners with early-stage start-ups, scale-ups, and global brands to identify, attract, and onboard high-impact talent.

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