

Survey: In a remote world, the battle for tech talent has gone **global**



Executive Summary

Thanks to the remote work revolution, the talent pool for many companies has expanded to encompass the entire world. But according to a new survey from Andela and Foundry, leveraging outsourced global talent has proven challenging. Almost half (47%) of companies are concerned about productivity and engagement, and time differences and language barriers are preventing them from collaborating with outsourced talent as integrated team members.

Still, those successfully outsourcing talent from the global talent pool are enjoying significant benefits, with increasing workforce strength and agility taking priority. After all, the survey found that the six most highly sought tech skills are also the six most difficult to source. Better yet, these companies are overwhelmingly outsourcing talent to staff long-term, multi-year projects that provide deeper value.

But one thing is clear: To leverage global talent effectively, organizations need a partner who can connect them with qualified candidates, scale remote strategies, and provide a playbook for building effective remote teams.

More people than ever are working entirely or partially outside of the office. While this rapid change poses some challenges, it also presents a big opportunity, especially for tech. Organizations are no longer limited to hiring tech talent within a 60-mile radius of a physical office. Now, the enterprise's technical talent pool encompasses the entire world.

Andela, a global talent cloud for enterprise companies, wanted to better understand the evolving landscape of the IT workforce and how businesses are leveraging emerging workplace dynamics. Specifically, the company

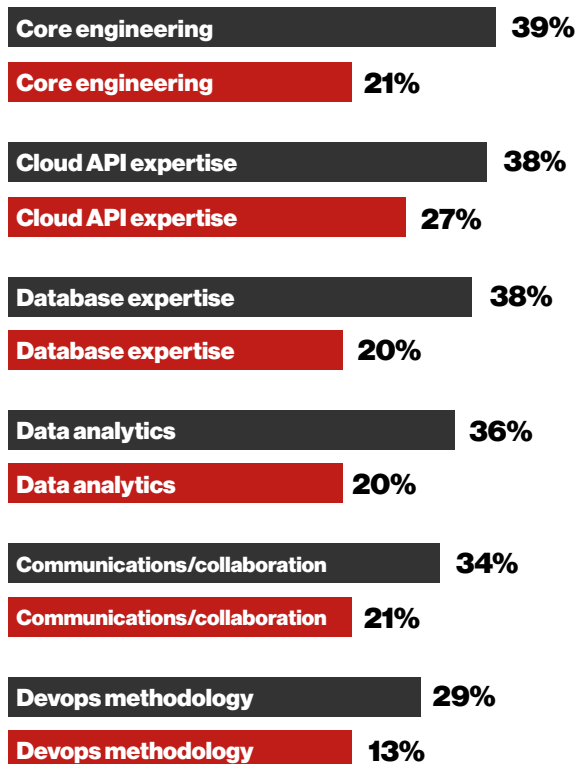
hoped to understand the current and future situation for remote/hybrid work; the most critical skills both now and in the near future; and the primary challenges of outsourcing tech functions.

Andela partnered with Foundry to conduct a survey of 211 enterprise IT decision-makers from the US, the UK, and Germany to identify goals and expectations over the next 12 months. More than eight in 10 (83%) companies had more than 1,000 employees, and more than one-third (34%) had more than 5,000.

A global battle for tech talent

The survey results show that companies are in a race to capture the best tech talent, irrespective of geographical location. In the typical enterprise, more than one in four (27%) tech workers are remote, and the data shows that the return-to-the-office hype may be overblown: 83% say the size of their remote workforce will either grow or remain the same over the next 12 months.

The six most in-demand tech skills & the six most difficult skills to source



The six most in-demand skills are also the most difficult to source (though the order is slightly different). It's also worth noting that high-demand skills can change quickly. A [Gartner study](#) showed that

one in three skills included in an average IT, finance, or sales posting in 2017 were obsolete by 2021. The warning is clear: Organizations need an agile, flexible workforce if they expect to remain current.

Software skills remain in especially high demand. The vast majority of organizations (93%) expect steady (51%) or increased demand (42%) for software development skills over the next 12 months.

Nevertheless, enterprises face significant barriers that are limiting their ability to tap into the global talent pool. Specifically, those who plan to keep remote work at the same or a reduced level named four primary causes: limited by compliance (55%), concerns about productivity or engagement (47%), management preferences (39%), and concerns about the impact on organizational culture (34%).

The concerns about productivity and engagement are not justified by academic research. Study after study shows, in fact, that remote employees are actually more productive than their in-office counterparts. [Harvard Business Review](#) found remote workers spend 9% more time interacting with customers and external partners, and [a Future Forum study](#) indicated workers who have full schedule flexibility are 29% more productive than those who do not.

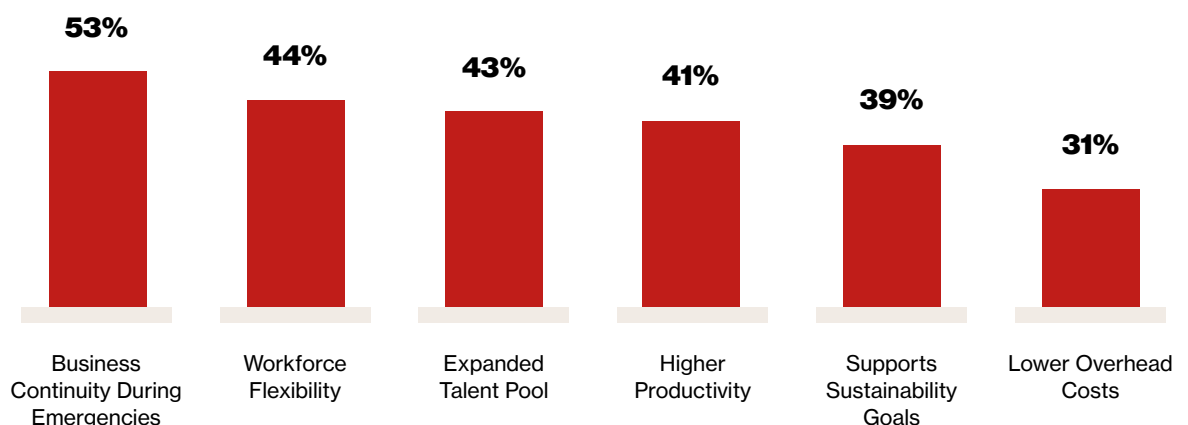
As for the effects on culture, according to Akua Sencherey, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Andela, while this is a genuine challenge, it is by no means insurmountable. “A company that has a strong culture should see that culture felt across remote and in-office teams,”

Sencherey said. “We recommend that companies workshop the parts of their culture that are tangible, such as facilitating ways for team members to publicly recognize others for excellent work.”

Benefits of hiring remote workers

Enterprises actively hiring remote workers share a set of common goals. The top four focus on workforce strength and agility. And while achieving lower overhead costs is a significant driver, it came in dead last, with only 31% saying it's a primary reason for hiring remotely.

Primary Benefits of Hiring Remote Worker



Given the current challenges around hiring and retaining top technical talent, it shouldn't be surprising that enterprises are prioritizing strength and agility over cost reduction. Tech talent has never been more critical to the success of nearly every enterprise, but finding talent that possesses the required skills has never been more difficult.

There are additional benefits that many organizations tend to overlook, Sencherey said, such as strengthening diversity and inclusivity. A [McKinsey study](#) backs this up, showing that companies with the highest gender diversity in the executive ranks are 48% more likely to outperform financially than those with the least diversity. And the most ethnically diverse are 36% more likely to outperform financially than their less diverse competitors.

"If you're adding people from another country, who don't look or think like you, you're bound to get a different perspective," Sencherey said.

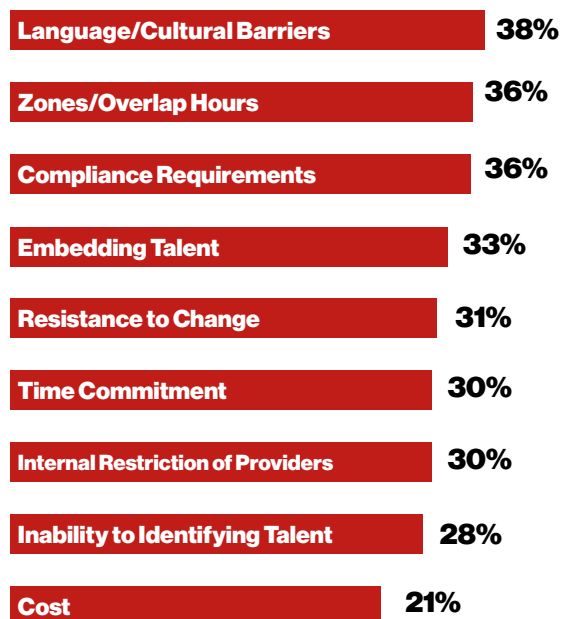
"That new perspective can make an enormous difference."

Localization is another often-underappreciated advantage of global outsourcing. "If you're a global enterprise that has clients in other regions, localization is huge," Sencherey said. "By incorporating remote work globally, you can consider employees based in other countries who already speak the local language and, just as important, understand different customs and cultures."

Overcoming barriers to outsourcing

The top two challenges to expanding outsourcing are language/cultural barriers and time zone differences. It's clear that organizations looking to outsource aren't simply looking for anonymous workers who can complete independent tasks. Instead, they expect to collaborate with outsourced talent to solve problems. After all, if work could be done completely independently, these issues would not pose a significant challenge. In fact, the No. 4 ranked barrier to outsourcing touches on this exact sentiment: concerns about easily embedding talent within a team.

Challenges Limiting Outsourcing Engagements



However, according to Sencherey, there are strategies that can successfully overcome these barriers. A trusted partner with a global network of talent, for example, can ensure that all candidates have the language skills required to communicate effectively with the rest of the team. As for time zone differences, organizations need to be strategic.

“We recommend having a four-hour workday overlap with whomever you hire,” Sencherey said. “It doesn’t need to be a full day, but there needs to be ample time to talk, ask questions, have one-on-one meetings, and hand over work.”

As for embedding remote talent successfully into teams, Sencherey points to the best practices of Andela’s clients.

“Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each talent,” she said. “A lot of that happens in the onboarding stage, so it’s important to have a strong process in place. Also, treat them like you would treat a full-time employee. Send them company swag, get them plugged into internal meetings, and integrate them into your performance review cycle. If you treat them like full-time employees, they’ll be encouraged to perform at that standard.”

Forward-thinking businesses see the writing on the wall and understand that there’s a huge battle for global tech talent. Organizations clearly need access to talent with hard-to-find skills. The ability to scale teams according to market conditions is also critical, especially in a volatile economy.

As demand for tech skills continues to grow, remote workers can help organizations meet their challenges. But doing so requires vetting and qualifying that talent. What’s more, they need to identify the best talent quickly before another organization hires them out from under their noses.

Working with a firm that specializes in helping enterprises find and retain top remote tech talent can make an enormous difference.

Leading businesses are already leveraging remote talent. On average, 4 out of 10 development tasks are now outsourced, **and over the next 12 months, enterprises expect a slight increase in outsourcing.** And enterprises aren't relegating outsourced talent to run-of-the-mill, routine work. Quite the contrary; two-thirds (67%) of outsourced tech projects have a scope of one to three years.

The data proves this. These are not day-to-day administrative tasks, but rather complex tasks that require specific expertise, including:

- **Project design (53%)**
- **Managed services (46%)**
- **Project planning and analysis (45%)**
- **Technology implementation (40%)**
- **Testing and QA (34%)**

Most respondents (54%) said their organizations prefer to expand their search for tech talent beyond their home region or country. Just 13% prefer to limit talent searches to within their own country.

Those companies that are taking advantage of global, remote talent report that they are capturing workforce agility, scalability, and skills. Clearly, these leaders in outsourcing are overcoming the barriers listed above to gain significant competitive advantages with their newly flexible and agile workforce.

The top four benefits they cited were:

- **Around-the-clock talent availability**
- **Ability to scale teams**
- **Contracting talent for short-term projects**
- **Access to hard-to-find skills and resources**

Benefits of Outsourcing



Achieving these benefits and overcoming the challenges of outsourcing typically requires working

with a trusted partner who specializes in providing end-to-end solutions across the life cycle of managing global talent.

Mastercard Foundry found success in global talent

Mastercard Foundry, a part of the financial giant Mastercard, is a good example of how an organization can overcome hiring challenges by working with a global network of talent. Its mission is to find ways to provide financial services to the more than 2 billion adults who currently lack access to mainstream banking. The company needed to expand its engineering team to scale the products that had started showing market promise.

But whenever a company brings innovative products and services to market, development needs increase and decrease rapidly. As a result, hiring full-time roles wasn't optimal. The interviewing and hiring process alone would take anywhere from two to three months, during which the market could change significantly. Mastercard Foundry wanted to secure high-quality talent much faster. Just as importantly, Mastercard Foundry wanted all new engineers to embed seamlessly into the team.

And as priorities shifted, the company needed to scale down just as quickly.

Mastercard Foundry turned to Andela, a company with a global network of pre-assessed, remote technical talent, and was able to source and place new tech talent within just two to four weeks. What's more, the remote technologists came with skills and technology stack competencies that complemented the team, along with the security and regulatory knowledge required to work in the financial services industry.

As a result, Mastercard Foundry was able to staff more than 10 projects globally, sourcing more than 20 technical skills competencies with remote talent that worked seamlessly with the rest of their team.

“Working with Andela helped us address that pain point of hiring and onboarding full-time engineers,” Edwin Kaduki, Vice President, Software Engineering at Mastercard Foundry, said. “Now, we can expand the team rapidly when we need to ramp up projects.”

Andela provides a global network of talent that powers its ability to provide end-to-end tech solutions. They can help scale remote strategies and assist with building remote teams. Their marketplace of talent takes care of matching the right talent for a company's needs, assessing talent performance, and providing compliant payment. Andela qualifies the technical knowledge and English-language proficiency of each candidate, helping clients build teams that are not only highly skilled but also highly effective remote collaborators.

The battle for tech talent is now global in scope, but it isn't one you must face alone. The right partner can turn this challenge into a huge opportunity. Working with a third party that has built a global network of qualified candidates can be the difference between scrambling to keep pace in the race for talent and outpacing the competition with a deep bench of highly skilled global team members.

For more information on how you can find tech skills on-demand, visit [Andela.com](https://andela.com).

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