

foundit Insights Tracker

May 2026

Hiring Trends in Gulf



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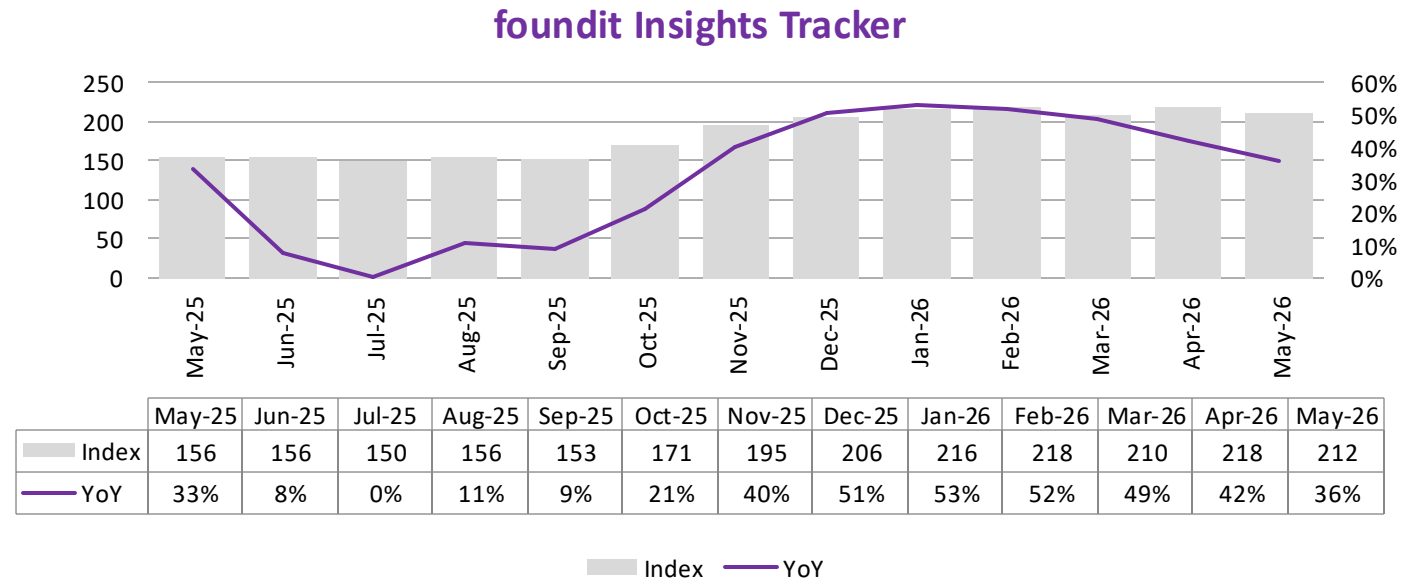
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Key Highlights of the Month

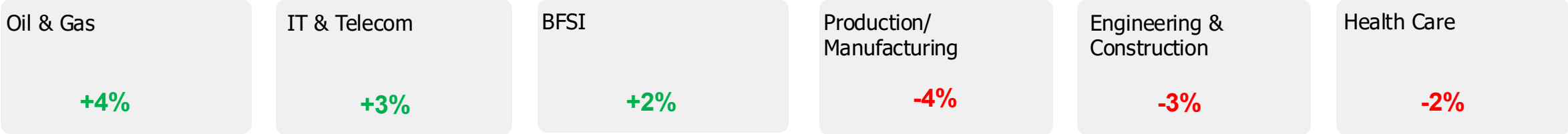
foundit Insights Tracker shows Gulf hiring activity easing from April's high, even as annual growth holds firm above 36% in May 2026

- ✓ According to the foundit Insights Tracker, the index rose from 156 in May 2025 to 212 in May 2026, **rising by 36%**, underscoring that the region's underlying annual hiring momentum has held its edge.
- ✓ On a month-on-month basis, the Gulf hiring index eased to 212 in May 2026 from 218 in April, a **3% month-on-month pullback** that interrupts April's resumed uptrend.
- ✓ Over a shorter horizon, the index has been essentially flat over the past three months (+1%) and has slowed to a **3% gain over six months** — a marked deceleration from the 12% six-month gain recorded just a month earlier, suggesting employers are consolidating rather than extending the aggressive late-2025 hiring push.

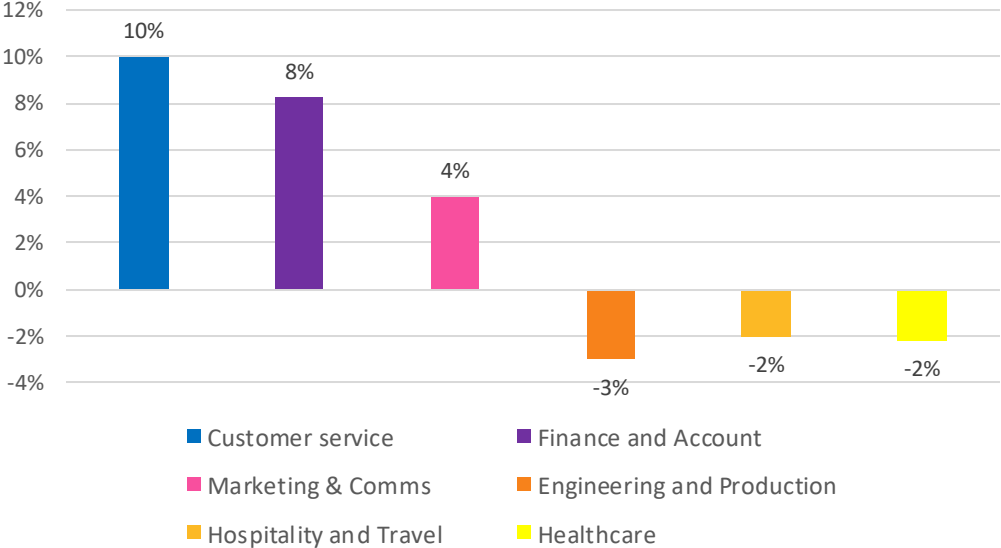


Hiring Trends – MoM*

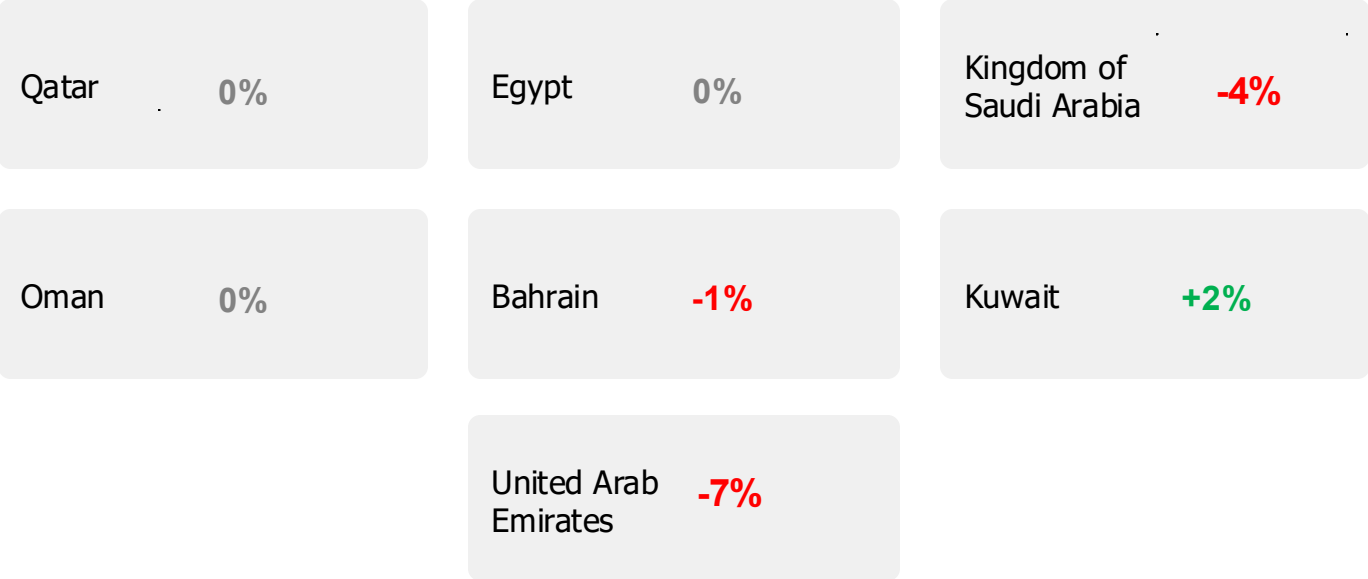
INDUSTRY



FUNCTIONAL AREA



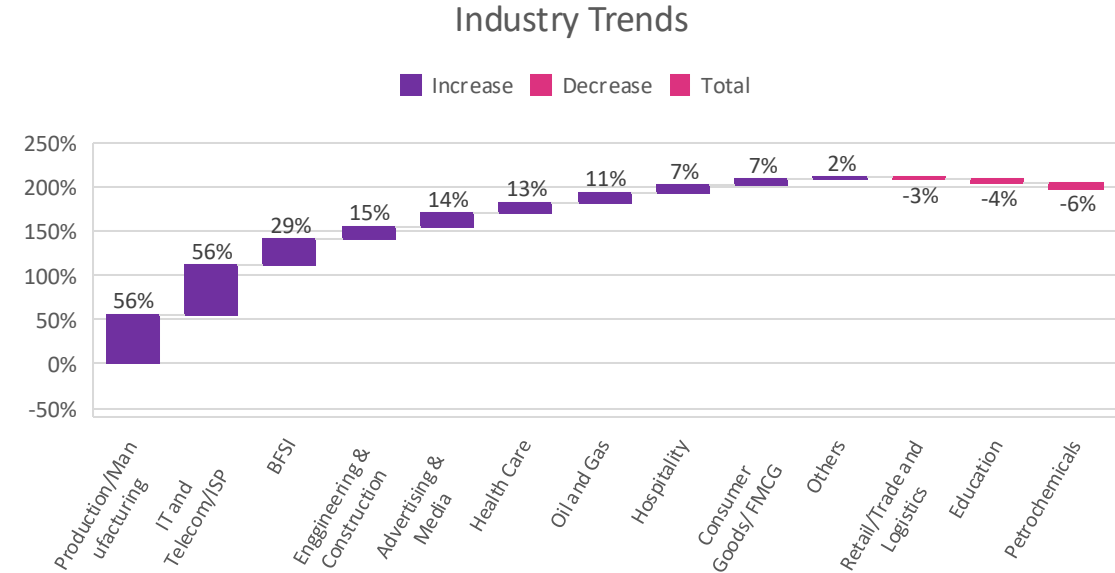
ACROSS REGIONS



Hiring Trends – Industry*

10 out of 13 industries monitored by the tracker registered an annual increase in hiring activity in May '26

- ✓ **Production/Manufacturing & Automotive** (+56%) and **IT & Telecom/ISP** (+56%) shared the lead in annual hiring growth, as the region's industrial localisation drive and continued investment in digital infrastructure kept demand for technical and engineering talent elevated. **BFSI** (+29%) followed at a distance, with banking expansion and compliance-led hiring sustaining financial services demand. **Engineering & Construction** (+15%) and **Advertising & Media** (+14%) also posted strong double-digit growth, the former benefiting from the UAE's pivot toward energy, transport and social infrastructure even as parts of the region's real-estate pipeline matured.
- ✓ **Retail/Trade & Logistics** (-3%), **Education** (-4%) and **Petrochemicals** (-6%) were the only sectors to register annual declines — Petrochemicals' pullback is consistent with a global environment of overcapacity and tight refining margins that has pressured GCC producers despite their cost advantages.
- ✓ **Health Care** (+13%), **Oil & Gas** (+11%), **Hospitality** (+7%) and **Consumer Goods/FMCG** (+7%) rounded out the table with moderate gains, reflecting steady demand tied to population growth, tourism, and resilient discretionary spending.



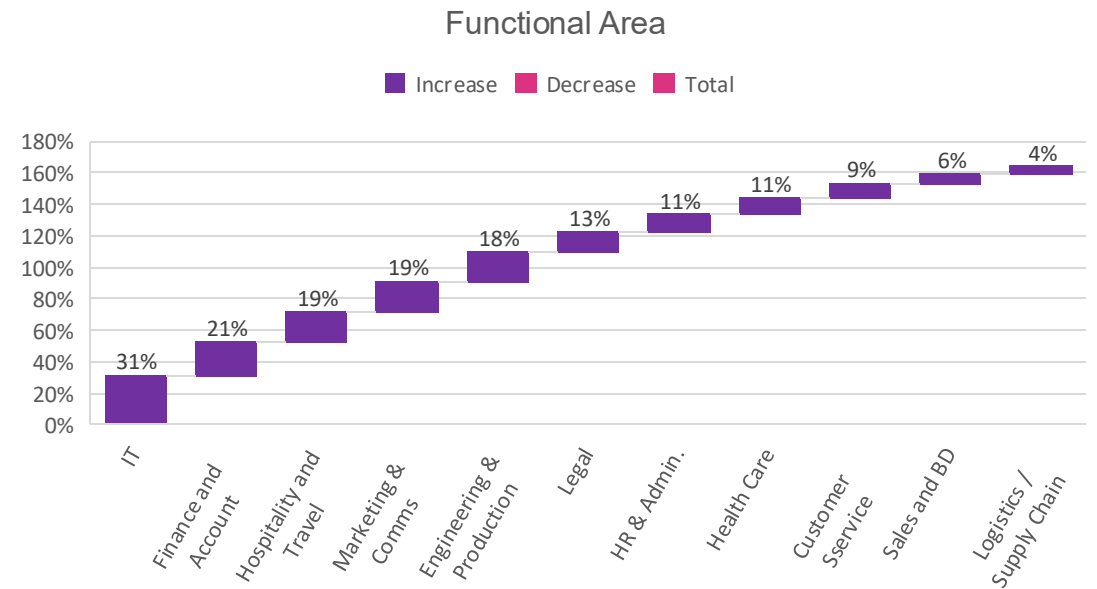
Hiring Trends - Functional Area*

Online recruitment activity surpassed the year-ago level in all 11 occupation groups monitored by the tracker

✔ **Software, Hardware & Telecom (+31%)** remained the top-performing function annually, sustained by continued technology adoption and digital infrastructure build-out. **Finance & Account (+21%)** posted the second-strongest gain, reflecting expanding compliance and reporting demand tied to banking sector growth. **Hospitality & Travel (+19%)** and **Marketing & Communications (+19%)** followed closely, underpinned by tourism expansion and rising brand investment, while **Engineering & Production (+18%)** tracked the region's active infrastructure pipeline.

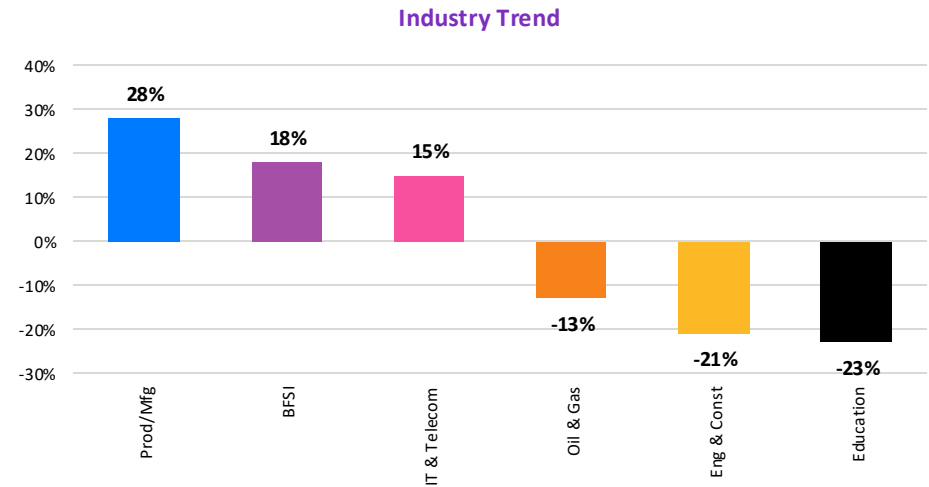
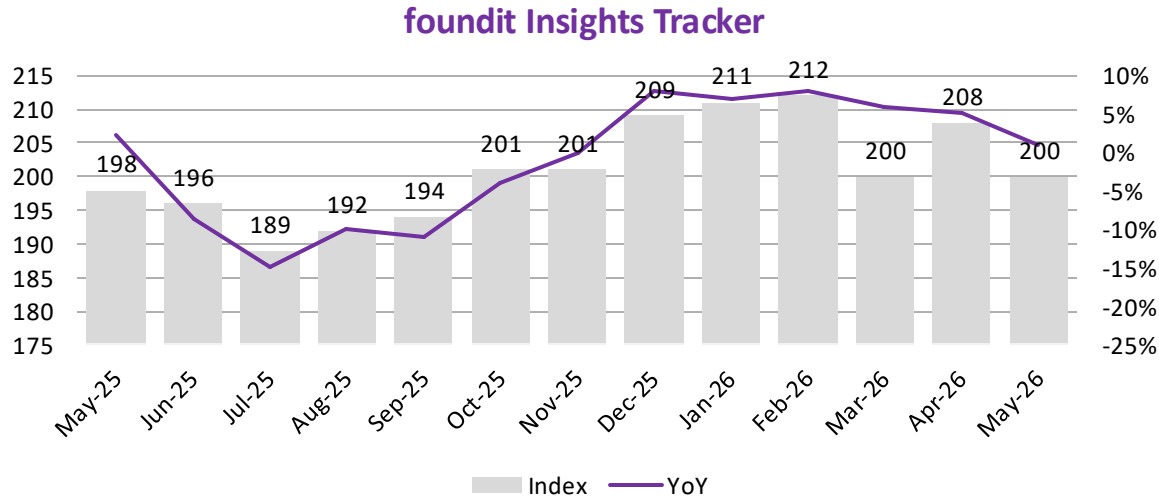
✔ **Sales & BD (+6%)** and **Purchase/Logistics/Supply Chain (+4%)** registered the smallest increases — still positive but pointing to more measured hiring in operationally-focused roles even as the broader function-wide picture stayed positive across the board for the first time in recent months.

✔ **Legal (+13%), HR & Admin (+11%), Health Care (+11%)** and **Customer Service (+9%)** posted more moderate but still solid annual gains,



Hiring Trends – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia *

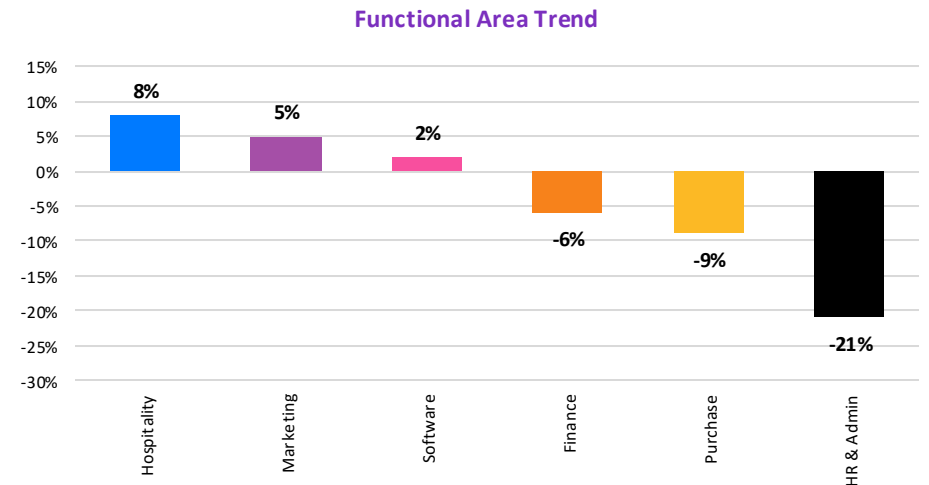
foundit Insights Tracker in KSA recorded 1% annual growth in May '26



✓ The KSA index slipped to **200** in May 2026, down 4% month-on-month from 208 in April, and annual growth flattened to just **1% year-on-year**, signalling that the Kingdom’s hiring expansion is losing near-term steam even as its economic diversification agenda continues.

✓ **Production & Manufacturing (+28%)** again led industry hiring growth as localisation priorities drive domestic industrial capacity build-out, with **BFSI (+18%)** and **IT & Telecom/ISP (+15%)** also posting solid annual gains. **Education (-23%)** and **Engineering & Construction (-21%)** recorded the steepest declines for a second consecutive month.

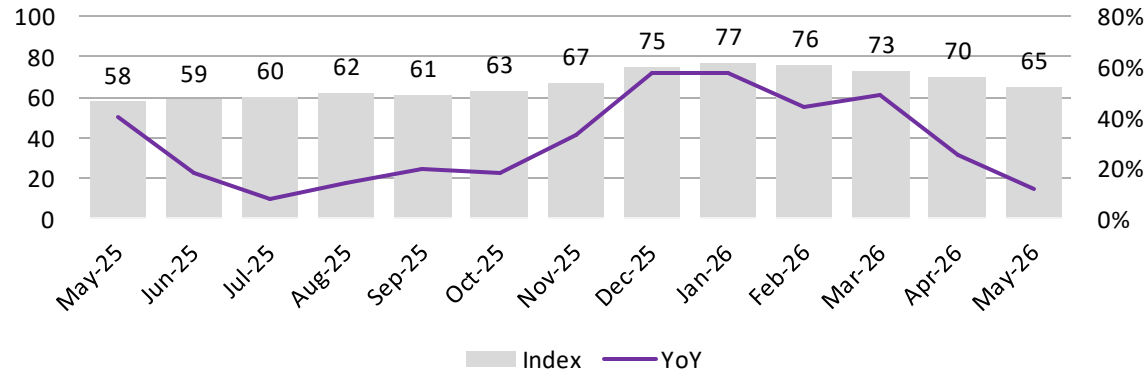
✓ **Hospitality & Travel (+8%)** leads in functions, followed by **Marketing & Communications (+5%)** and **Software, Hardware & Telecom (+2%)**. **HR & Admin (-21%)** remained the weakest function, with **Purchase/Logistics/Supply Chain (-9%)** and **Finance & Account (-6%)** also declining — pointing to broad-based softening in administrative and operational hiring even as core technical functions hold.



Hiring Trends – United Arab Emirates*

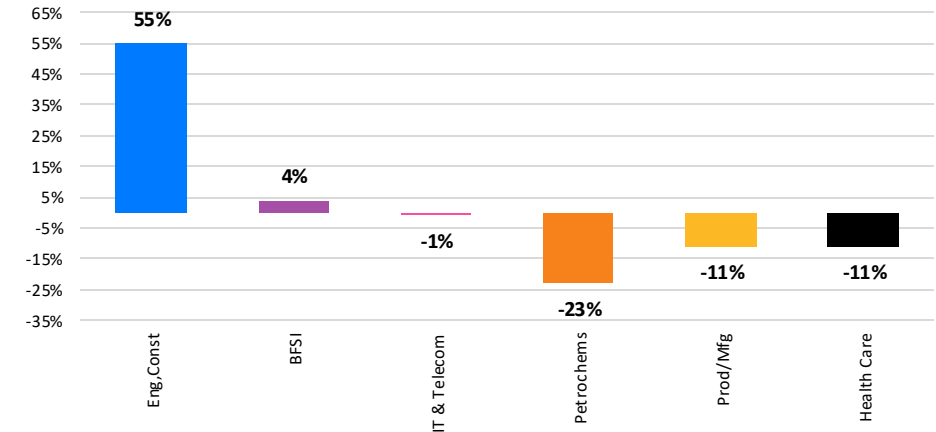
foundit Insights Tracker in UAE recorded 12% annual growth in May '26

foundit Insights Tracker

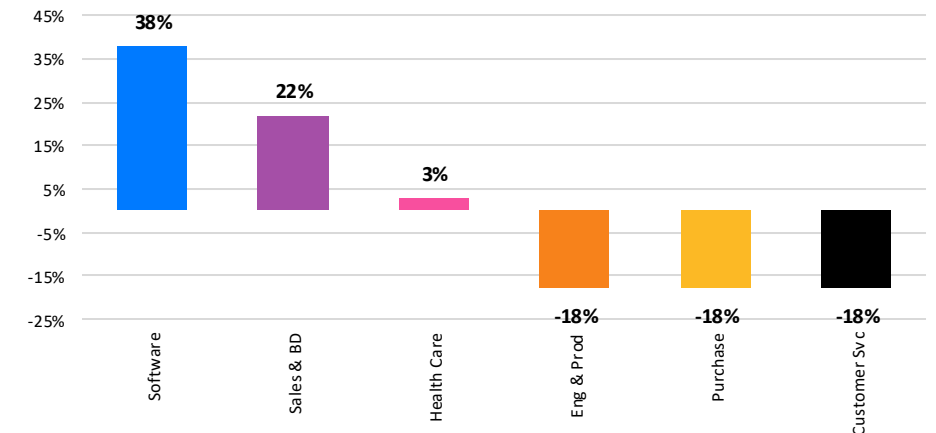


- ✓ The UAE index eased to 65 in May 2026, **down 7% month-on-month** from 70 in April, with annual growth slowing to **12%**.
- ✓ **Engineering, Construction & Real Estate (+55%)** extended its lead by a wide margin, as the UAE's infrastructure pipeline pivots from real estate toward energy and transport projects, alongside large public investment programmes in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. **BFSI (+4%)** was the only other industry to post annual growth; every other sector contracted, with **Petrochemicals (-23%)** recording the steepest decline amid global pressures.
- Among functions, **Software, Hardware & Telecom (+31%)** leads at the top, while **Hospitality & Travel (-19%)** is the lowest, as hiring eased from the unusually strong demand seen a year earlier.

Industry Trend



Functional Area Trend



Data & Methodology

The foundit Insights Tracker (fit) is a comprehensive monthly analysis of online job posting activity conducted by foundit.in. Based on a real-time review of millions of employer job opportunities culled from a large, representative selection of online career outlets, fit presents a snapshot of employer online recruitment activity nationwide. In its earlier form (as Monster Employment Index), it gave a broader view of hiring trends by industry, function, location and experience levels. In its new avatar, it provides next-level insights on recruitment trends and tracks developments in demand for key skills, roles available and salary range on offer in the market.

In order to avoid excessive monthly fluctuations, the index is calculated using a volatility-adjusting formula. We publish the data in a volume index format with the base value of 100. The index describes changes in the level of online job demand against the baseline. An increase in the index indicates growth in online job availability and suggests an increase in the demand for employees by employers.

Foundit Insights Tracker (formerly Monster Employment Index) was first launched in India in May 2010 with data collected since February 2009 followed by Gulf in April 2011 with data collected since February 2010; Singapore in May 2014 with data collected since January 2011; Philippines and Malaysia in May 2015 with data collected since February 2014.

foundit has taken due care in compiling and processing the data available from various sources for foundit Insights Tracker (fit), but does not guarantee the accuracy, adequacy or completeness of any information and is not responsible for any errors or omissions or action / decision taken or for the result obtained from the use of such information.



About foundit.in APAC & Middle East

foundit.in, formerly Monster, is a leading talent platform offering comprehensive employment solutions to recruiters and job seekers across India, SEA, and Gulf. Since its inception, the company has been assisting over 90 million registered users to find jobs, upskill, and connect with the right opportunities across 18 countries. Over the last two decades, the company has been a catalyst in the world of recruitment solutions with advanced technology, seeking to efficiently bridge the talent gap across industry verticals, experience levels, and geographies. Today, foundit.in is committed to enabling and connecting the right talent with the right opportunities by harnessing the power of deep-tech to sharpen hyper-personalised job searches, and precision hiring. foundit.in strongly believes that a job title doesn't define one's potential and leverages technology to dig deeper to curate opportunities central to the needs, aspirations, and dreams of each user.

To learn more about foundit in APAC & Gulf, visit:

www.foundit.in

www.foundit.my

www.founditgulf.com

www.foundit.com.ph

www.foundit.sg

www.foundit.hk



Annexure



Annexure: All Gulf Industry Data*

| Industries | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 | Jan-26 | Feb-26 | Mar-26 | Apr-26 | May-26 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engineering, Construction and Real Estate | 101 | 100 | 109 | 112 | 112 | 119 | 115 | 120 | 123 | 130 | 125 | 119 | 116 |
| BFSI | 103 | 101 | 128 | 132 | 115 | 107 | 111 | 108 | 118 | 125 | 125 | 130 | 133 |
| Production/Manufacturing, Automotive and Ancillary | 84 | 87 | 108 | 111 | 96 | 106 | 116 | 122 | 126 | 128 | 131 | 136 | 131 |
| Retail/Trade and Logistics | 73 | 73 | 67 | 67 | 66 | 74 | 76 | 76 | 79 | 74 | 72 | 72 | 71 |
| Oil and Gas | 53 | 47 | 49 | 50 | 54 | 55 | 53 | 55 | 58 | 57 | 58 | 57 | 59 |
| IT and Telecom/ISP | 367 | 368 | 394 | 420 | 422 | 422 | 474 | 506 | 504 | 531 | 521 | 555 | 572 |
| Hospitality | 108 | 105 | 108 | 109 | 111 | 107 | 117 | 118 | 123 | 126 | 111 | 117 | 116 |
| Education | 136 | 126 | 138 | 143 | 148 | 150 | 158 | 159 | 135 | 134 | 134 | 132 | 131 |
| Petrochemicals | 119 | 108 | 115 | 118 | 112 | 111 | 109 | 112 | 110 | 110 | 116 | 110 | 112 |
| FMCG, Food & Packaged Food , Home Appliance, Garments/ Textiles/ Leather, Gems & Jewellery | 125 | 118 | 114 | 112 | 112 | 111 | 126 | 133 | 138 | 145 | 137 | 132 | 134 |
| Health Care | 104 | 104 | 106 | 108 | 105 | 104 | 109 | 108 | 109 | 114 | 114 | 119 | 117 |
| Advertising, Market Research, Public Relations, Media and Entertainment | 69 | 68 | 65 | 65 | 63 | 66 | 69 | 72 | 74 | 81 | 76 | 78 | 79 |

* Represents Index figures

Annexure: All Gulf Functional Area Data*

| Industries | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 | Jan-26 | Feb-26 | Mar-26 | Apr-26 | May-26 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engineering and Production | 152 | 153 | 165 | 169 | 162 | 167 | 160 | 170 | 180 | 185 | 190 | 185 | 180 |
| Finance and Account | 86 | 86 | 88 | 88 | 77 | 79 | 85 | 87 | 90 | 95 | 94 | 96 | 104 |
| HR & Admin. | 89 | 86 | 101 | 113 | 105 | 110 | 122 | 117 | 114 | 107 | 102 | 99 | 99 |
| Sales and BD | 83 | 81 | 81 | 83 | 77 | 80 | 86 | 88 | 88 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 88 |
| Purchase / Logistics / Supply Chain | 156 | 155 | 161 | 162 | 158 | 162 | 156 | 157 | 161 | 161 | 158 | 161 | 163 |
| Hospitality and Travel | 108 | 106 | 104 | 113 | 123 | 108 | 124 | 119 | 117 | 107 | 129 | 132 | 129 |
| Health Care | 95 | 92 | 98 | 100 | 96 | 99 | 102 | 100 | 102 | 108 | 105 | 107 | 105 |
| Software, Hardware, Telecom | 210 | 212 | 208 | 217 | 217 | 214 | 261 | 269 | 281 | 305 | 290 | 279 | 276 |
| Marketing & Communications/Arts/Creative | 130 | 128 | 122 | 124 | 121 | 131 | 131 | 132 | 140 | 151 | 145 | 149 | 155 |
| Customer service | 106 | 108 | 112 | 99 | 105 | 104 | 109 | 108 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 116 |
| Legal | 88 | 90 | 90 | 94 | 87 | 91 | 91 | 93 | 96 | 96 | 94 | 96 | 99 |

Annexure: KSA Industry Data *

| Industries | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 | Jan-26 | Feb-26 | Mar-26 | Apr-26 | May-26 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engineering, Construction and Real Estate | 139 | 137 | 143 | 135 | 119 | 122 | 117 | 124 | 119 | 121 | 114 | 114 | 110 |
| BFSI | 128 | 126 | 127 | 127 | 126 | 127 | 125 | 125 | 141 | 149 | 148 | 148 | 151 |
| Production/Manufacturing, Automotive and Ancillary | 127 | 136 | 150 | 162 | 176 | 192 | 195 | 196 | 193 | 166 | 167 | 169 | 163 |
| Retail/Trade and Logistics | 87 | 85 | 82 | 77 | 82 | 85 | 82 | 85 | 83 | 87 | 81 | 84 | 85 |
| Oil and Gas | 80 | 76 | 72 | 69 | 69 | 67 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 70 |
| IT and Telecom/ISP | 263 | 265 | 270 | 283 | 299 | 303 | 291 | 300 | 308 | 307 | 294 | 291 | 303 |
| Hospitality | 124 | 121 | 121 | 125 | 145 | 143 | 142 | 150 | 142 | 145 | 122 | 139 | 137 |
| Education | 141 | 130 | 120 | 114 | 110 | 106 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 108 | 104 | 107 | 108 |
| Petrochemicals | 123 | 120 | 116 | 114 | 112 | 110 | 108 | 110 | 108 | 107 | 107 | 106 | 108 |
| FMCG, Food & Packaged Food , Home Appliance, Garments/ Textiles/ Leather, Gems & Jewellery | 134 | 129 | 127 | 124 | 127 | 126 | 134 | 143 | 142 | 147 | 144 | 139 | 140 |
| Health Care | 114 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 112 | 113 | 114 | 108 | 113 | 113 | 114 | 114 |
| Advertising, Market Research, Public Relations, Media and Entertainment | 323 | 315 | 279 | 296 | 295 | 297 | 309 | 316 | 339 | 339 | 332 | 345 | 345 |

Annexure: KSA Functional Area Data*

| Industries | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 | Jan-26 | Feb-26 | Mar-26 | Apr-26 | May-26 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engineering and Production | 154 | 152 | 157 | 154 | 156 | 159 | 159 | 172 | 174 | 167 | 157 | 157 | 153 |
| Finance and Account | 122 | 118 | 116 | 116 | 115 | 113 | 110 | 110 | 113 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 115 |
| HR & Admin. | 139 | 135 | 133 | 134 | 132 | 131 | 127 | 125 | 119 | 120 | 113 | 113 | 110 |
| Sales and BD | 151 | 149 | 144 | 143 | 129 | 142 | 148 | 151 | 144 | 156 | 153 | 159 | 149 |
| Purchase / Logistics / Supply Chain | 207 | 204 | 199 | 200 | 223 | 234 | 230 | 211 | 202 | 204 | 199 | 205 | 189 |
| Hospitality and Travel | 71 | 69 | 64 | 67 | 74 | 78 | 78 | 94 | 82 | 79 | 75 | 76 | 77 |
| Health Care | 116 | 114 | 117 | 118 | 116 | 113 | 116 | 121 | 118 | 121 | 118 | 116 | 115 |
| Software, Hardware, Telecom | 319 | 315 | 313 | 313 | 327 | 320 | 322 | 324 | 313 | 309 | 309 | 295 | 326 |
| Marketing & Communications/Arts/Creative | 186 | 186 | 186 | 173 | 173 | 192 | 195 | 193 | 195 | 195 | 192 | 197 | 195 |

Annexure: UAE Industry Data*

| Industries | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 | Jan-26 | Feb-26 | Mar-26 | Apr-26 | May-26 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engineering, Construction and Real Estate | 97 | 103 | 99 | 90 | 95 | 109 | 112 | 120 | 123 | 127 | 132 | 139 | 150 |
| BFSI | 85 | 75 | 69 | 64 | 75 | 77 | 81 | 80 | 84 | 92 | 86 | 87 | 88 |
| Production/Manufacturing, Automotive and Ancillary | 82 | 92 | 90 | 93 | 80 | 74 | 74 | 73 | 73 | 75 | 75 | 73 | 73 |
| Retail/Trade and Logistics | 77 | 76 | 73 | 73 | 107 | 75 | 75 | 76 | 80 | 81 | 74 | 74 | 69 |
| Oil and Gas | 53 | 51 | 49 | 48 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 |
| IT and Telecom/ISP | 115 | 112 | 106 | 100 | 109 | 112 | 111 | 117 | 118 | 120 | 118 | 116 | 114 |
| Hospitality | 76 | 74 | 71 | 69 | 74 | 75 | 80 | 82 | 80 | 76 | 72 | 69 | 70 |
| Education | 132 | 124 | 171 | 186 | 154 | 155 | 143 | 142 | 137 | 137 | 134 | 135 | 130 |
| Petrochemicals | 124 | 110 | 146 | 140 | 135 | 134 | 114 | 113 | 106 | 104 | 99 | 98 | 95 |
| FMCG, Food & Packaged Food , Home Appliance, Garments/ Textiles/ Leather, Gems & Jewellery | 113 | 111 | 99 | 97 | 82 | 94 | 106 | 112 | 111 | 113 | 116 | 107 | 107 |
| Health Care | 101 | 104 | 92 | 94 | 85 | 87 | 87 | 87 | 91 | 92 | 90 | 91 | 90 |
| Advertising, Market Research, Public Relations, Media and Entertainment | 79 | 78 | 80 | 79 | 72 | 74 | 76 | 76 | 75 | 75 | 74 | 71 | 72 |

Annexure: UAE Functional Area Data*

| Industries | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 | Jan-26 | Feb-26 | Mar-26 | Apr-26 | May-26 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engineering and Production | 196 | 196 | 183 | 181 | 155 | 161 | 161 | 171 | 168 | 169 | 159 | 161 | 161 |
| Finance and Account | 45 | 46 | 46 | 48 | 48 | 45 | 43 | 42 | 42 | 46 | 42 | 41 | 41 |
| HR & Admin. | 35 | 35 | 40 | 49 | 49 | 45 | 41 | 36 | 33 | 35 | 31 | 30 | 30 |
| Sales and BD | 32 | 30 | 28 | 25 | 27 | 32 | 34 | 37 | 42 | 49 | 42 | 43 | 39 |
| Purchase / Logistics / Supply Chain | 136 | 128 | 109 | 110 | 115 | 126 | 123 | 121 | 131 | 109 | 110 | 113 | 112 |
| Hospitality and Travel | 53 | 50 | 49 | 52 | 53 | 52 | 55 | 56 | 54 | 48 | 44 | 46 | 47 |
| Health Care | 67 | 67 | 69 | 68 | 66 | 68 | 68 | 67 | 67 | 69 | 69 | 70 | 69 |
| Software, Hardware, Telecom | 90 | 91 | 92 | 94 | 94 | 96 | 102 | 107 | 109 | 119 | 120 | 124 | 124 |
| Marketing & Communications/Arts/Creative | 110 | 107 | 104 | 103 | 90 | 100 | 108 | 112 | 113 | 105 | 101 | 107 | 105 |
| Customer service | 60 | 58 | 59 | 54 | 53 | 53 | 54 | 50 | 52 | 52 | 51 | 49 | 49 |

Thank you

