Insights Tracker

September 2026

Hiring Trends in Gulf



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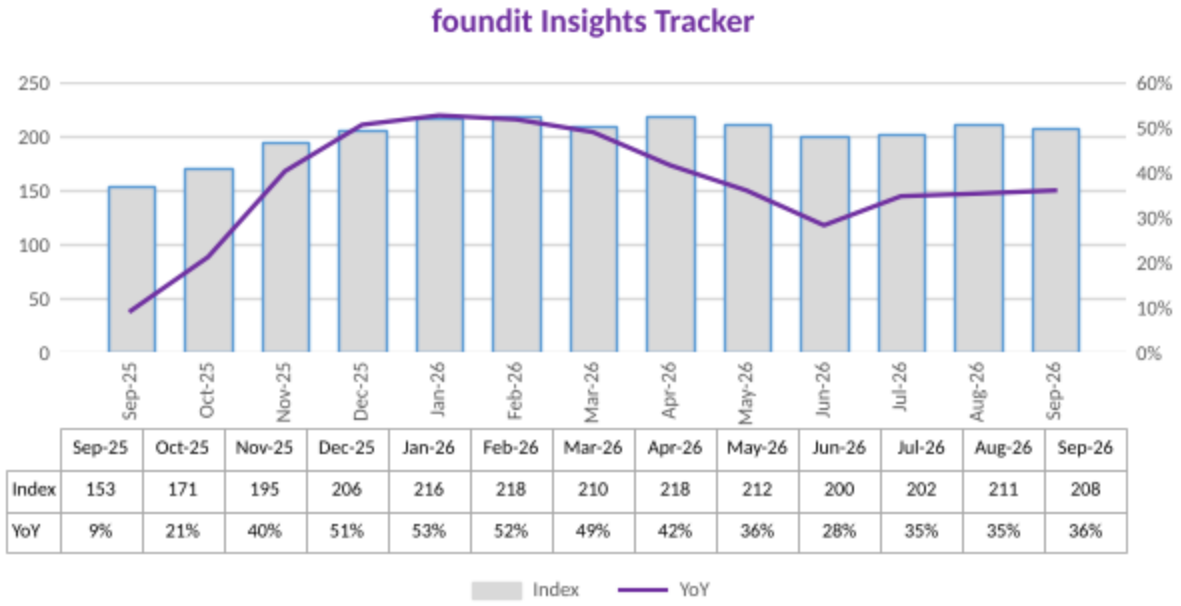
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Key Highlights of the Month

foundit Insights Tracker shows Gulf hiring activity edging lower in September 2026, with annual growth at 36%

- According to the foundit Insights Tracker, the index rose from 153 in September 2025 to 208 in September 2026, **rising by 36%,** underscoring that the annual gain rests largely on a soft September 2025 base rather than fresh demand.
- On a month-on-month basis, the Gulf hiring index eased to 208 in September 2026 from 211 in August, a **1% month-on-month pullback** that keeps activity within the range held since January rather than signalling a fresh slowdown.
- Over a shorter horizon, the index has picked up over the past three months (+4%) and has narrowed to a **1% decline over six months** — an improvement on the flat three-month and 3% six-month readings recorded in August, suggesting hiring is settling after the early-2026 peak.



	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Index	153	171	195	206	216	218	210	218	212	200	202	211	208
YoY	9%	21%	40%	51%	53%	52%	49%	42%	36%	28%	35%	35%	36%

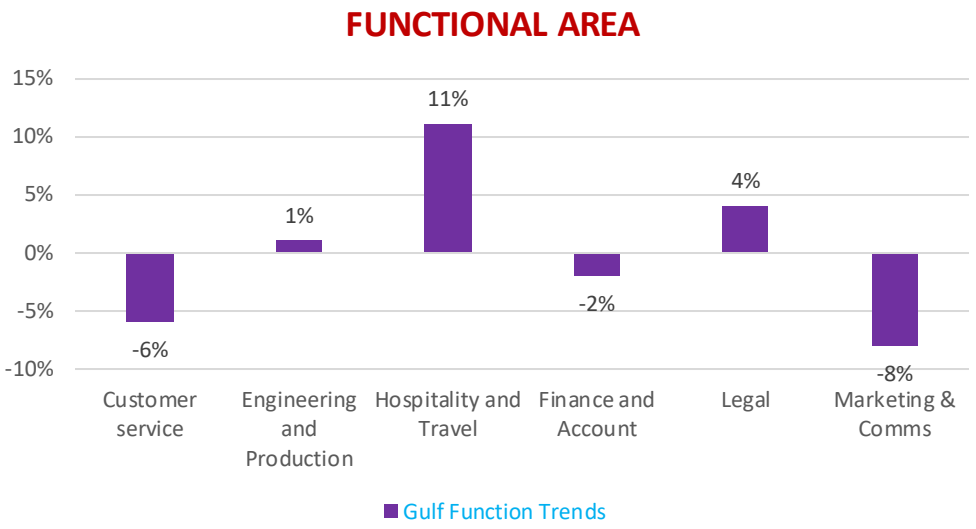
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Hiring Trends – MoM*

INDUSTRY

Education	Hospitality	BFSI	Engineering & Construction	Retail	Oil & Gas
-1%	+4%	-3%	-2%	-1%	-4%

FUNCTIONAL AREA



ACROSS REGIONS

Qatar +3%	Egypt -3%	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia -6%
Oman -2%	Bahrain +1%	Kuwait +3%
	United Arab Emirates +9%	

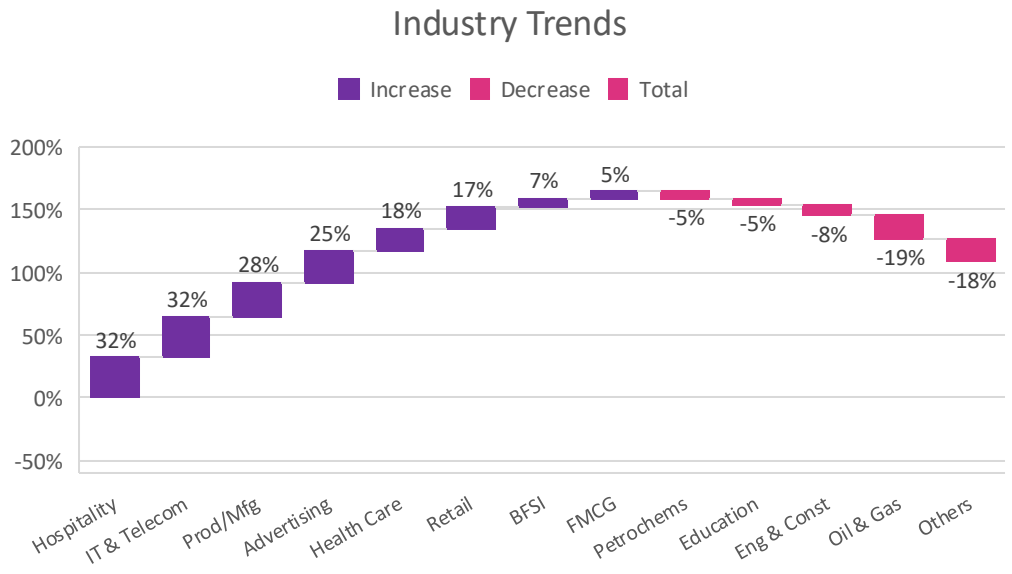
Hiring Trends – Industry*

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

Hospitality (+32%) and **IT & Telecom/ISP (+32%)** jointly led annual hiring growth, the former reaching the highest level on record as the winter tourism and events season approached, the latter on sustained investment in digital infrastructure. **Production/Manufacturing & Automotive (+28%)** followed, helped by a soft September 2025 base. **Advertising & Media (+25%)** also gained as brand and campaign spend built into the final quarter.

Oil & Gas (-19%) posted the steepest annual decline, falling to its lowest level since 2023 amid cautious upstream spending. **Engineering & Construction (-8%)** also fell as several large projects moved past peak hiring, while **Education (-5%)** eased against a firm start to the 2025 academic year and **Petrochemicals (-5%)** stayed under margin pressure.

Health Care (+18%) and **Retail/Trade & Logistics (+17%)** posted solid gains on wider clinical capacity and firm consumer demand, while **BFSI (+7%)** and **Consumer Goods/FMCG (+5%)** rounded out the table with more measured increases.



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* All figures represent percentage change between Sep '25 and Sep '26

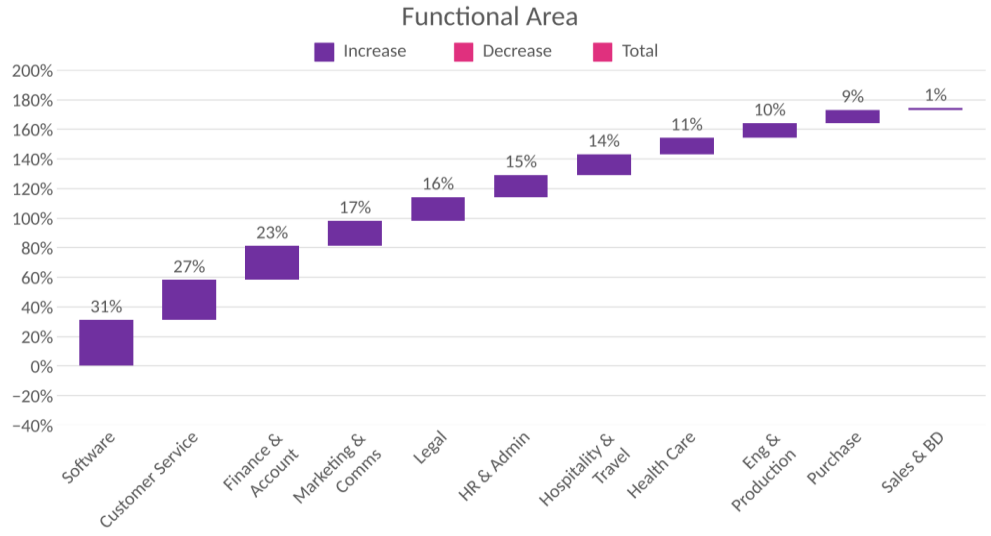
Hiring Trends - Functional Area*

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

- **Software, Hardware & Telecom (+31%)** was the top-performing function annually, as technology adoption continued to broaden across the Gulf. **Customer Service (+27%)** followed on the continued scale-up of service-delivery hubs, while **Finance & Account (+23%)** held third place. **Marketing & Communications (+17%)** and **Legal (+16%)** also posted double-digit gains, underlining the breadth of demand.

- **Sales & BD (+1%)** recorded the slimmest gain after a sharp pullback during the month. **Purchase/Logistics/Supply Chain (+9%)** and **Engineering & Production (+10%)** also trailed the wider table as project-led hiring stayed subdued.

- **HR & Admin (+15%)**, **Hospitality & Travel (+14%)** and **Health Care (+11%)** rounded out the table with steady annual gains, reflecting continued corporate headcount build-out and firm front-line and clinical demand across the region.

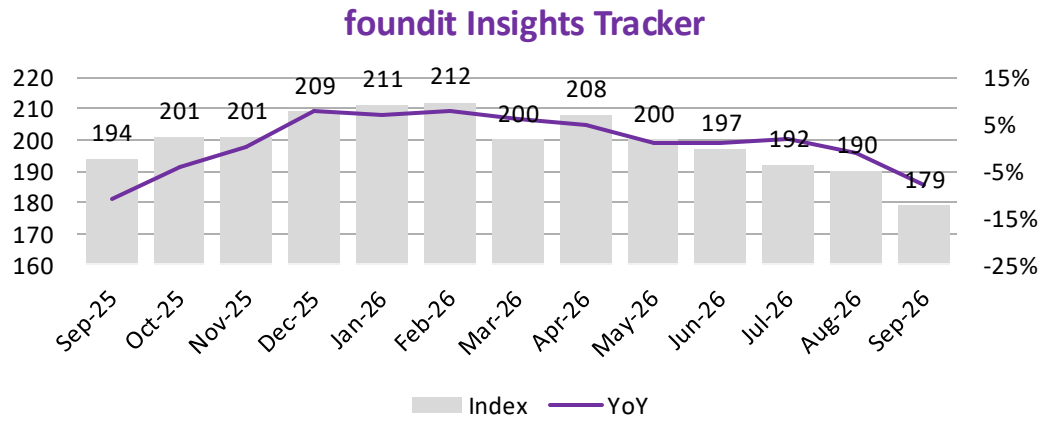


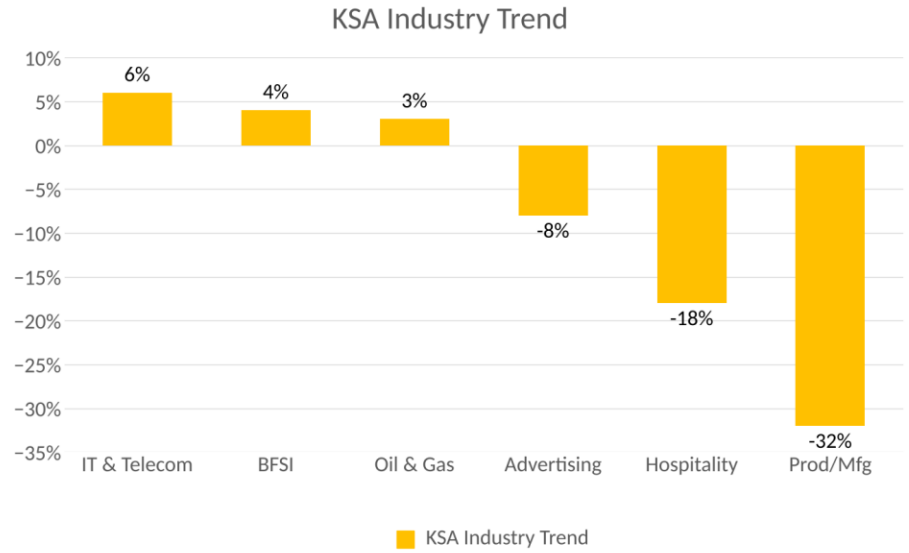
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* All figures represent percentage change between Sep '25 and Sep '26

Hiring Trends – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia *

foundit Insights Tracker in KSA shows an 8% annual decline in September '26

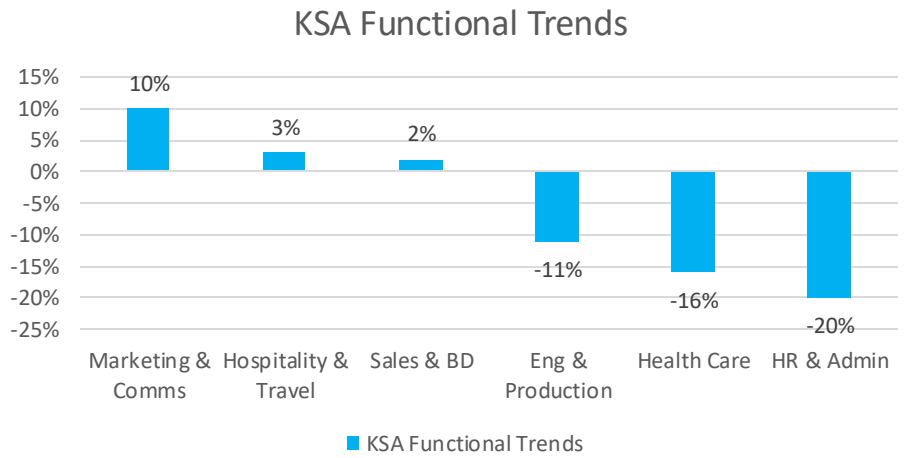




- The KSA index eased to **179** in September 2026, down 6% month-on-month from 190 in August and **8% lower year-on-year**, a fifth straight monthly decline that takes the Kingdom's hiring activity to its lowest since January 2024 as project-linked hiring cools.

- **IT & Telecom/ISP (+6%)** led KSA industry hiring on continued digital infrastructure investment, with **BFSI (+4%)** and **Oil & Gas (+3%)** also edging higher. **Production/Manufacturing & Automotive (-32%)** fell most steeply as last year's hiring surge continued to unwind, while **Hospitality (-18%)** eased as the summer travel peak faded and **Advertising & Media (-8%)** also declined.

- **Marketing & Communications (+10%)** led occupation groups, with **Hospitality & Travel (+3%)** and **Sales & BD (+2%)** also gaining. **HR & Admin (-20%)** and **Health Care (-16%)** remained the weakest, while **Engineering & Production (-11%)** fell as project-led hiring cooled.

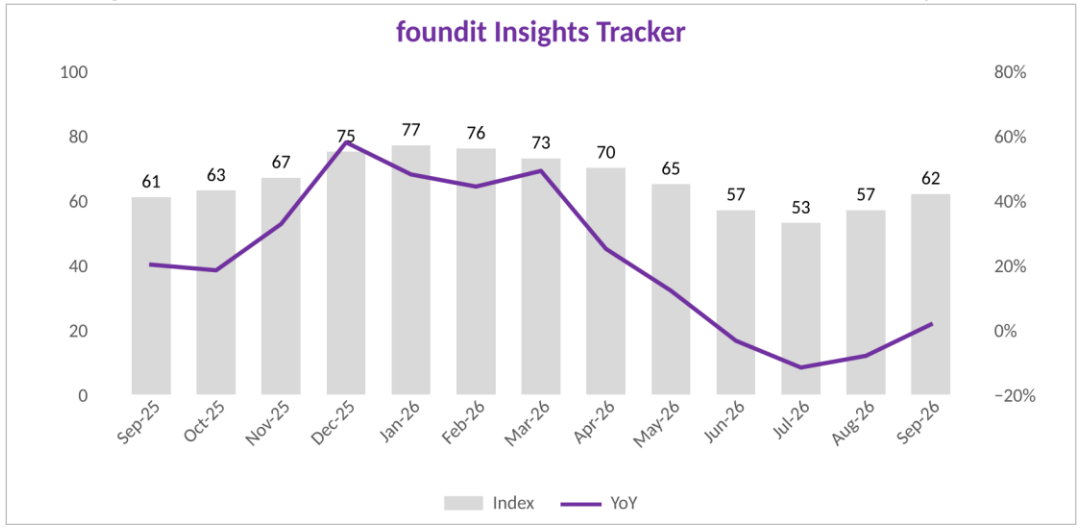


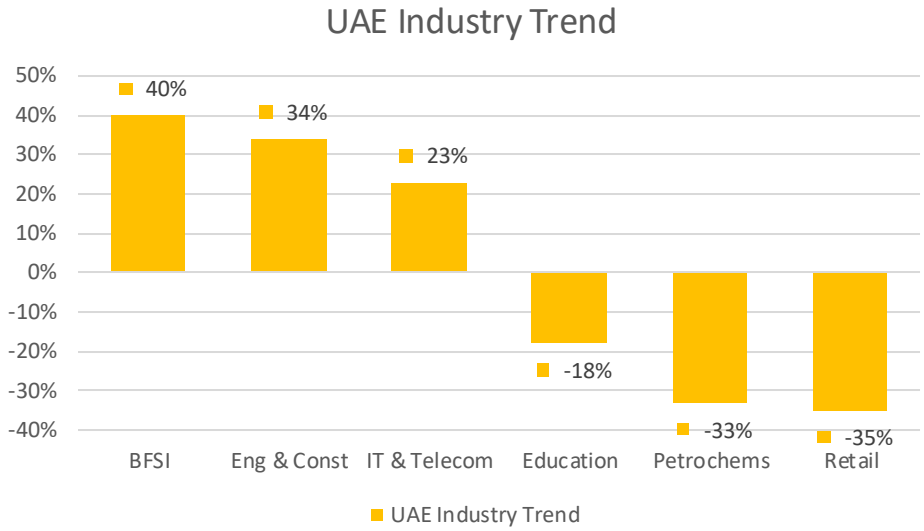
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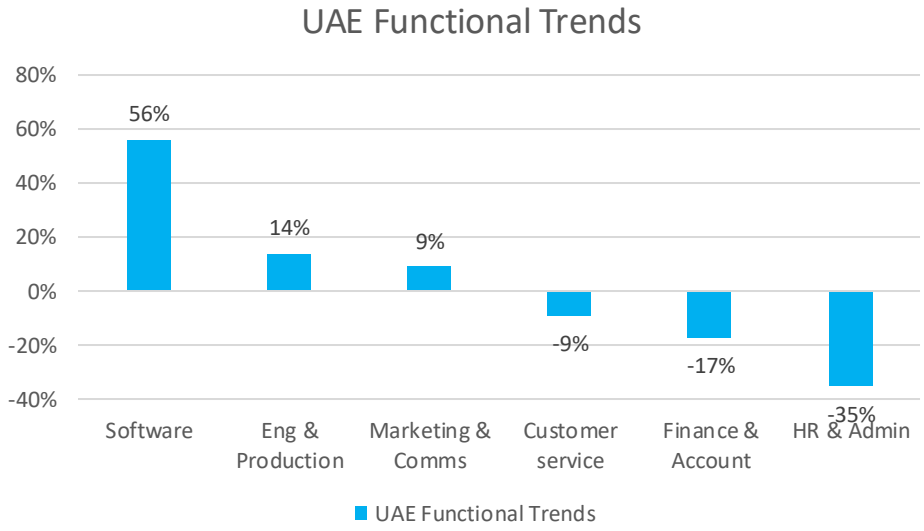
* All figures represent percentage change between Sep '25 and Sep '26

Hiring Trends – United Arab Emirates*

foundit Insights Tracker in UAE shows a 2% annual increase in September '26







- The UAE index rose to 62 in September 2026, **up 9% month-on-month** from 57 in August and 2% higher year-on-year, its first annual gain since May.

- **BFSI (+40%)** led UAE industry hiring on deepening financial-services expansion, with **Engineering, Construction & Real Estate (+34%)** close behind on infrastructure and public-investment programmes. **IT & Telecom/ISP (+23%)** also advanced. **Retail/Trade & Logistics (-35%)** and **Petrochemicals (-33%)** fell most, the former against a one-off spike in September 2025 and the latter under margin pressure, with **Education (-18%)** also lower.

- **Software, Hardware & Telecom (+56%)** led UAE occupation groups by a wide margin, with **Engineering & Production (+14%)** and **Marketing & Communications (+9%)** following. **HR & Admin (-35%)**, **Finance & Account (-17%)** and **Customer Service (-9%)** remained the weakest.

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* All figures represent percentage change between Sep ’25 and Sep ‘26

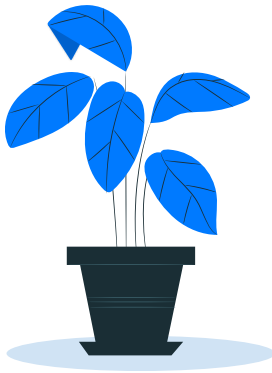
Data & Methodology

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.



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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
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Annexure



Annexure: All Gulf Industry Data*

Industries	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Engineering, Construction and Real Estate	112	119	115	120	123	130	125	119	116	102	103	105	103
BFSI	115	107	111	108	118	125	125	130	133	122	126	127	123
Production/Manufacturing, Automotive and Ancillary	96	106	116	122	126	128	131	136	131	127	124	125	123
Retail/Trade and Logistics	66	74	76	76	79	74	72	72	71	79	76	78	77
Oil and Gas	54	55	53	55	58	57	58	57	59	50	47	46	44
IT and Telecom/ISP	422	422	474	506	504	531	521	555	572	546	563	548	555
Hospitality	111	107	117	118	123	126	111	117	116	127	130	142	147
Education	148	150	158	159	135	134	134	132	131	132	138	142	140
Petrochemicals	112	111	109	112	110	110	116	110	112	108	108	107	106
FMCG, Food & Packaged Food , Home Appliance, Garments/ Textiles/ Leather, Gems & Jewellery	112	111	126	133	138	145	137	132	134	125	121	126	118
Health Care	105	104	109	108	109	114	114	119	117	116	115	119	124
Advertising, Market Research, Public Relations, Media and Entertainment	63	66	69	72	74	81	76	78	79	78	77	81	79

* Represents Index figures

Annexure: All Gulf Functional Area Data*

Industries	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Engineering and Production	162	167	160	170	180	185	190	185	180	179	174	177	178
Finance and Account	77	79	85	87	90	95	94	96	104	94	96	97	95
HR & Admin.	105	110	122	117	114	107	102	99	99	97	106	120	121
Sales and BD	77	80	86	88	88	89	89	89	88	82	81	88	78
Purchase / Logistics / Supply Chain	158	162	156	157	161	161	158	161	163	157	159	171	172
Hospitality and Travel	123	108	124	119	117	117	129	132	129	127	127	126	140
Health Care	96	99	102	100	102	108	105	107	105	99	97	103	107
Software, Hardware, Telecom	217	214	261	269	281	305	290	279	276	253	237	261	285
Marketing & Communications/Arts/Creative	121	131	131	132	140	151	145	149	155	141	139	154	141
Customer service	105	104	109	108	108	107	106	105	116	121	132	141	133
Legal	87	91	91	93	96	96	94	96	99	90	93	97	101

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* Represents Index figures

Annexure: KSA Industry Data*

Industries	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Engineering, Construction and Real Estate	119	122	117	124	119	121	114	114	110	113	117	118	116
BFSI	126	127	125	125	141	149	148	148	151	150	146	139	131
Production/Manufacturing, Automotive and Ancillary	176	192	195	196	193	166	167	169	163	143	133	121	120
Retail/Trade and Logistics	82	85	82	85	83	87	81	84	85	81	82	85	82
Oil and Gas	69	67	66	67	68	68	67	66	70	74	71	72	71
IT and Telecom/ISP	299	303	291	300	308	307	294	291	303	291	309	319	316
Hospitality	145	143	142	150	142	145	133	139	137	136	128	130	119
Education	110	106	103	102	101	108	104	107	108	118	112	114	112
Petrochemicals	112	110	108	110	108	107	107	106	108	106	107	106	105
FMCG, Food & Packaged Food , Home Appliance, Garments/ Textiles/ Leather, Gems & Jewellery	127	126	134	143	142	147	144	139	140	147	139	142	128
Health Care	113	112	113	114	108	113	113	114	114	111	110	109	107
Advertising, Market Research, Public Relations, Media and Entertainment	295	297	309	316	339	339	332	345	345	325	306	289	271

* Represents Index figures

Annexure: KSA Functional Area Data*

Industries	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Engineering and Production	156	159	159	172	174	167	157	157	153	146	153	143	139
Finance and Account	115	113	110	110	113	116	115	114	115	115	114	110	105
HR & Admin.	132	131	127	125	119	120	113	113	110	109	110	108	105
Sales and BD	129	142	148	151	144	156	153	159	149	159	145	141	131
Purchase / Logistics / Supply Chain	223	234	230	211	202	204	199	205	189	194	194	205	206
Hospitality and Travel	74	78	78	94	82	79	75	76	77	83	78	77	76
Health Care	116	113	116	121	118	121	118	116	115	108	114	101	98
Software, Hardware, Telecom	327	320	322	324	313	309	309	295	326	327	328	327	313
Marketing & Communications/Arts/Creative	173	192	195	193	195	195	192	197	195	192	191	192	190

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Annexure: UAE Industry Data*

Industries	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Engineering, Construction and Real Estate	95	109	112	120	123	127	132	139	150	131	136	139	127
BFSI	75	77	81	80	84	92	86	87	88	83	86	89	105
Production/Manufacturing, Automotive and Ancillary	80	74	74	73	73	75	75	73	73	71	70	68	70
Retail/Trade and Logistics	107	75	75	76	80	81	74	74	69	68	68	69	70
Oil and Gas	50	50	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	50	52
IT and Telecom/ISP	109	112	111	117	118	120	118	116	114	120	123	132	134
Hospitality	74	75	80	82	80	76	72	69	70	75	73	80	80
Education	154	155	143	142	137	137	134	135	130	130	129	124	126
Petrochemicals	135	134	114	113	106	104	99	98	95	93	93	92	91
FMCG, Food & Packaged Food , Home Appliance, Garments/ Textiles/ Leather, Gems & Jewellery	82	94	106	112	111	113	116	107	107	100	86	103	90
Health Care	85	87	87	87	91	92	90	91	90	87	87	87	87
Advertising, Market Research, Public Relations, Media and Entertainment	72	74	76	76	75	75	74	71	72	71	71	74	70

* Represents Index figures

Annexure: UAE Functional Area Data*

Industries	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26
Engineering and Production	155	161	161	171	168	169	159	161	161	155	151	166	176
Finance and Account	48	45	43	42	42	46	42	41	41	38	39	39	40
HR & Admin.	49	45	41	36	33	35	31	30	30	26	25	33	32
Sales and BD	27	32	34	37	42	49	42	43	39	38	35	31	29
Purchase / Logistics / Supply Chain	115	126	123	121	131	109	110	113	112	117	113	115	122
Hospitality and Travel	53	52	55	56	54	48	44	46	47	52	50	57	55
Health Care	66	68	68	67	67	69	69	70	69	67	67	69	70
Software, Hardware, Telecom	94	96	102	107	109	119	120	124	124	121	130	137	147
Marketing & Communications/Arts/Creative	90	100	108	112	113	105	101	107	105	97	101	102	98
Customer service	53	53	54	50	52	52	51	49	49	48	48	47	48

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Thank you



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