AI Labor Market Update

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KEY INSIGHTS

LinkedIn's Economic Graph provides a real-time view of how AI is reshaping the global labor market across 1.3B+ members. In this edition, we find that the entry-level slowdown owes more to economic uncertainty than to AI, but AI may be turning up in reshaping which occupations grow, where junior pullbacks are felt most, and in facilitating entrepreneurship.

1. Entry-level hiring: Broad weakness, with greater declines in entry-level AI-augmented roles

- **Entry-level hiring is faring slightly worse than overall hiring, not collapsing disproportionately**: Across the US, UK, France, Germany, and India, entry-level hiring reduced modestly more than overall hiring last quarter (e.g., -7.6% vs. -6.9% YoY in the US), pointing to broad economic uncertainty rather than a collapse in entry-level roles. Green shoots in entry-level hiring include AI Engineer, ranking among the fastest growing roles across markets (UK +97% YoY, US +62%, India +55%), Data Annotator in India (+75%), and Growth Specialist in the US (+97%).
- **The junior pullback is concentrated in AI-augmented roles**: Entry-level hiring in AI-augmented roles (like Software Engineer) ran 3 to 10 percentage points below augmented hiring overall (-9.6% YoY vs. -6.5% in the US; -23.0% vs. -12.6% in France), while junior hiring in AI-disrupted and AI-insulated roles broadly tracked overall hiring.

2. The fastest growing roles: AI builders and company founders

- **The fastest growing jobs fell into two categories**: roles building AI and entrepreneurship. AI Engineer was the fastest growing entry-level role in the US (+62% YoY) and India (+55%) last quarter and ranked among the fastest growing occupations overall. Entrepreneurship surged across all markets, averaging at +49% YoY last quarter.
- **Declines are concentrated in knowledge work**: The fastest hiring declines last quarter were in design (UX Designer and UI Designer fell 34-49% YoY in the US and India), data and analytical work (Data Analyst -27% among entry-level and -30% overall in the UK), and administrative coordination (Project Manager -39% in France and -29% in Germany).

3. New founders are among AI's earliest adopters

- **Founders are rapidly upskilling in AI**: In 2026, 13.0% of founders globally have an AI skill vs. 1.2% of members overall — an 11x gap that has widened from a 6x gap in 2022. The trend is led by India and Germany, where ~18% of founders are AI-skilled, followed by the US (12.5% of founders in 2026, up 3x since 2022).
- **Entrepreneurship is accelerating**: The share of members adding founder to their profile rose between 20% and 38% YoY across all five markets last quarter, led by India (+37.5%) — a segment of the labor market where AI appears to be creating opportunity by reducing barriers to start a company. Founder and Co-Founder also ranked highest in our fastest growing occupations across Europe.

4. Sector deep dive: Finance is upskilling in AI and hiring fewer-entry level workers

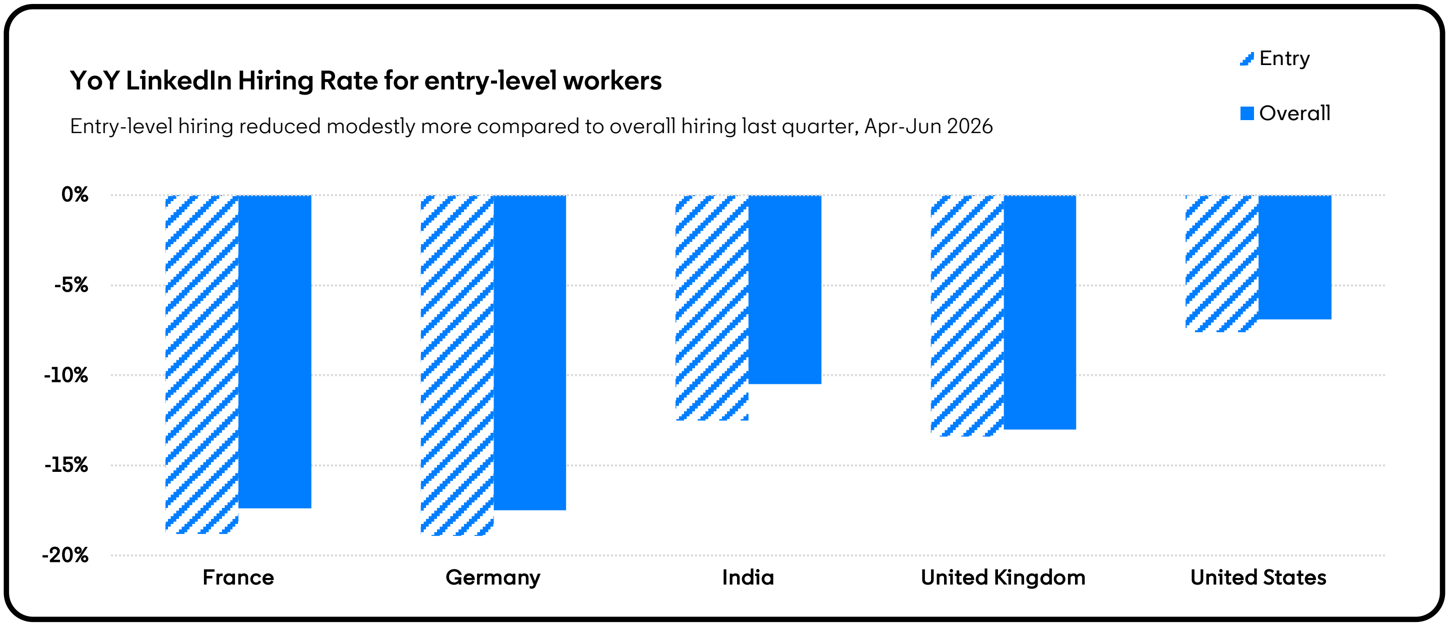
- **Finance's AI talent makes up ~6% of its workforce**: The share of finance professionals with AI talent has risen every year since 2016 in all five markets, at least doubling and more than quadrupling in India. The UK has the largest share of AI talent, making up 5.8% of finance professionals, followed by the US (4.8%).
- **Entry-level finance hiring takes a hit:** entry-level hiring softened further in June compared to overall hiring in the UK (-16.3% YoY vs -12.5%), Germany (-16.9% vs -14.3%), France (-17.6% vs -15.5%) and India (-15.7% vs -14.0%). A sign of tension in finance as firms continue to upgrade their AI capabilities alongside hiring pullbacks. The US is the lone exception, where entry-level hiring is holding up better (-8.1% vs -8.8%).

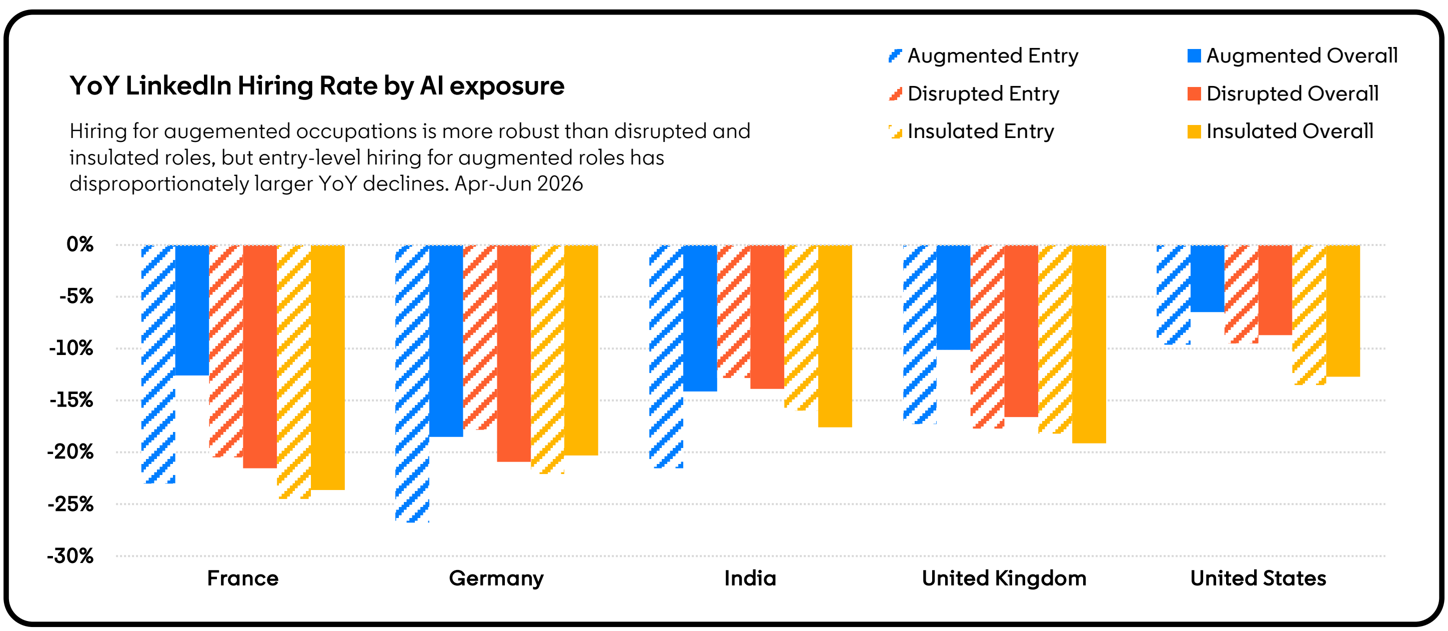
ENTRY-LEVEL HIRING: BROAD WEAKNESS, WITH GREATER DECLINES IN ENTRY-LEVEL AI-AUGMENTED ROLES

Hiring remained soft across all five markets last quarter, with entry-level roles faring slightly worse than overall. Entry-level hiring fell 0.4 to 2.0 percentage points more than overall — from a slight gap in the UK (-13.4% YoY vs -13.0%) to the widest in India (-12.5% vs -10.5%) — a shortfall too small to suggest entry-level workers are being singled out.

As referenced in our last edition, we continue to see evidence employers are pulling back on junior hiring in occupations that are augmented by AI. Entry-level hiring for augmented roles ran 3 to 10 percentage points below augmented hiring overall in every market, from -9.6% YoY vs. -6.5% in the US to -23.0% vs. -12.6% in France. In disrupted and insulated occupations, by contrast, entry-level hiring moved broadly in line with (and in several cases better than) overall; in Germany, entry-level hiring in disrupted roles fell -17.8% vs. -20.9% overall. Where AI is most complementary to the work, employers may be leaning on experienced staff to deploy new AI tools while deferring entry-level hiring.

However, the evidence does not point to a widespread decline in entry-level opportunities driven by AI. In France, the UK and the US, the single hardest hit entry-level segment was insulated roles, those least exposed to AI (-24.5% YoY, -18.2% and -13.5% respectively), implicating broad economic uncertainty more than technology.





THE FASTEST GROWING ROLES: AI BUILDERS AND COMPANY FOUNDERS

Hiring growth is strongest in two categories: jobs building AI and entrepreneurship. Last quarter, AI Engineer was the fastest growing entry-level role in the US (+62% YoY) and India (+55%), also ranking among the five fastest growing occupations overall (+64% YoY in the US; +68% in India closely followed by AI Specialist at +49%). Alongside it, entrepreneurship surged across all markets: Founder topped the overall lists in France (+55% YoY), Germany (+47%) and the UK (+53%), with Co-Founder close behind in all three, and ranked in the top five for the US (+54%) and India (+37%).

Hiring declines in roles augmented by AI: the largest declines were in design (UX Designer and UI Designer fell 34-49% YoY in the US and India), data and analytics (Data Analyst -27% among entry-level and -30% overall in the UK) and administrative coordination (Project Manager fell 29-39% YoY in France and Germany). The squeeze reached some entry technical roles even as specialist AI titles boomed: entry-level Software Engineer fell -32% YoY in Germany and Frontend Developer -39% in India, more evidence employers are pivoting to senior hires in augmented roles.

Top 5 fastest growing and top 5 fastest declining occupations

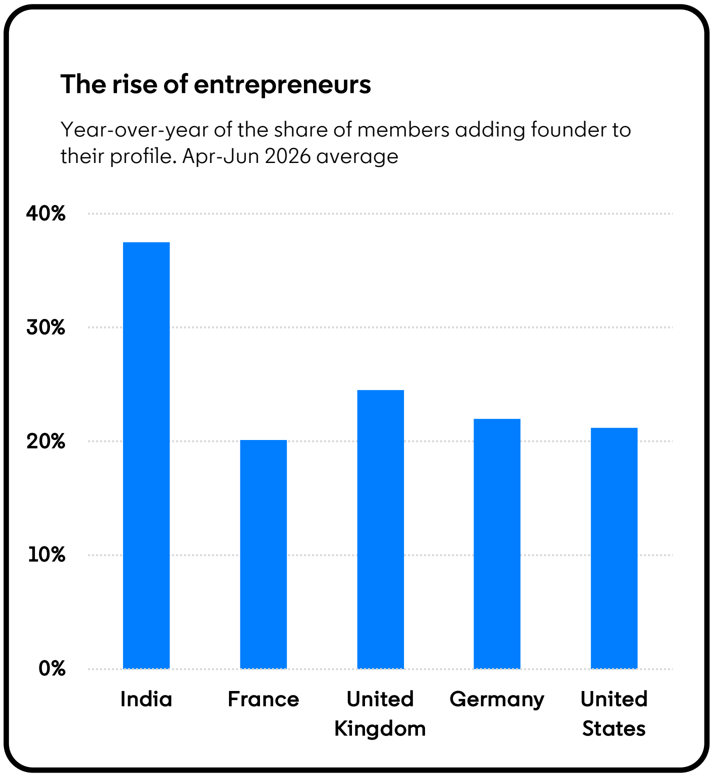
By year-over-year hiring, Apr-Jun 2026

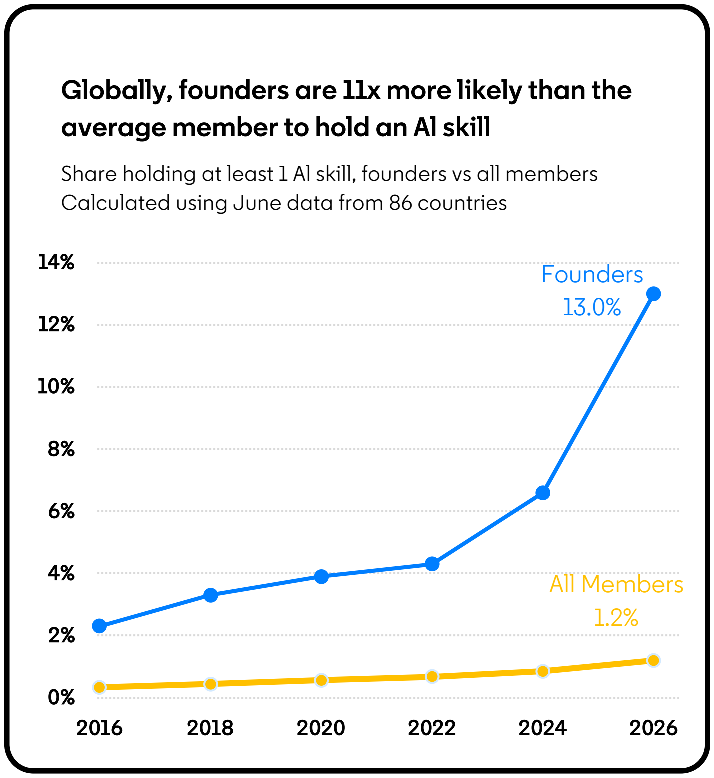
		Fastest growing					Fastest declining				
France	Overall	Founder +55%	Co-Founder +10%	Office Assistant +9%	Bus Dev Manager +0%	Business Specialist -1%	Comms Manager -38%	Direction Assistant -39%	Project Manager -39%	Community Manager -39%	Employment Consultant -59%
	Entry	Office Assistant +8%	Sales Specialist -1%	Teacher -11%	Payroll Accountant -11%	Sales Manager -11%	Customer Associate -34%	Comms Assistant -35%	Project Associate -35%	Direction Assistant -39%	Project Manager -42%
Germany	Overall	Founder +47%	Co-Founder +25%	Salesperson -7%	Account Exec -9%	System Engineer -10%	Project Manager -29%	Head of Sales -29%	HR Manager -29%	Product Manager -30%	Research Assistant -30%
	Entry	Salesperson -8%	Postdoc Researcher -12%	Law Clerk -14%	Account Manager -19%	Sales Specialist -21%	Project Engineer -28%	Project Manager -30%	Software Engineer -32%	Research Assistant -33%	Product Manager -33%
India	Overall	Program Specialist +82%	AI Engineer +68%	AI Specialist +49%	IT Analyst +39%	Founder +37%	Project Management Specialist -39%	Manager of Sales -39%	Project Associate -39%	Interface Specialist -43%	UI Designer -49%
	Entry	AI Engineer +55%	IT Analyst +43%	Campus Ambassador +35%	Research Assistant +32%	Accountant +12%	Legal Associate -38%	Frontend Developer -39%	QA Specialist -41%	Project Associate -42%	Interface Specialist -45%
United Kingdom	Overall	Founder +53%	Finance Specialist +23%	Sales Dev Rep +19%	Co-Founder +10%	Sales Assistant +1%	Chef -29%	Data Analyst -30%	Owner -34%	Salesperson -36%	Board Member -40%
	Entry	Sales Dev Rep +22%	Sales Assistant +1%	Event Specialist -1%	Teaching Assistant -2%	Bartender -6%	Project Manager -23%	Marketing Assistant -23%	Software Engineer -24%	Data Analyst -27%	Salesperson -38%
United States	Overall	Principal +173%	Growth Specialist +65%	AI Engineer +64%	Retail Associate +59%	Founder +54%	Nurse Practitioner -30%	Real Estate Agent -33%	UX Designer -34%	Technical Writer -34%	IT Consultant -38%
	Entry	AI Engineer +62%	Retail Associate +59%	Datacenter Tech +34%	Operations Assoc +21%	Program Specialist +20%	Copywriter -26%	Product Mktg Mgr -26%	Pharmacist -27%	Digital Marketing Specialist -31%	Real Estate Agent -33%

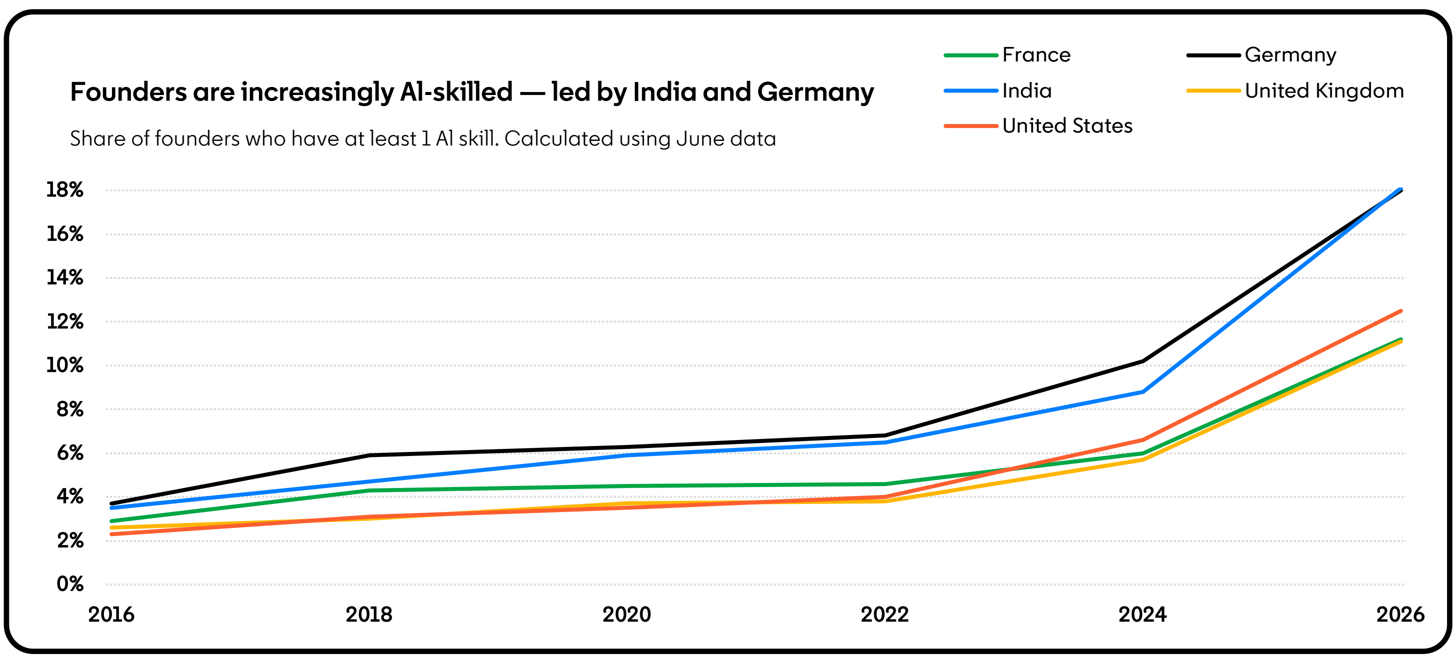
NEW FOUNDERS ARE AMONG AI'S EARLIEST ADOPTERS

Entrepreneurship is accelerating: The share of members adding founder to their profile rose between 20% and 38% YoY across all five markets this quarter, led by India (+37.5%), followed by the UK (+24.5%), Germany (+22.0%), the US (+21.2%) and France (+20.1%) — a segment of the labor market where AI appears to be creating opportunity.

Globally, founders are ~11x more likely to have AI skills than the average member: in 2026, 13.0% of founders globally have at least one AI skill vs. 1.2% of members overall, a 10.8x gap that has sharply diverged since 2022, as founders' AI-skill adoption (up 3.0x since 2022) outpaces the wider LinkedIn membership (up 1.8x). The trend is led by India and Germany, where ~18% of members that added founder to their profile have an AI skill, up 2.8x in India and 2.7x in Germany since 2022. The US climbed 3.1x since 2022 to 12.5% in 2026, while the UK (11.1%) and France (11.2%) lag.





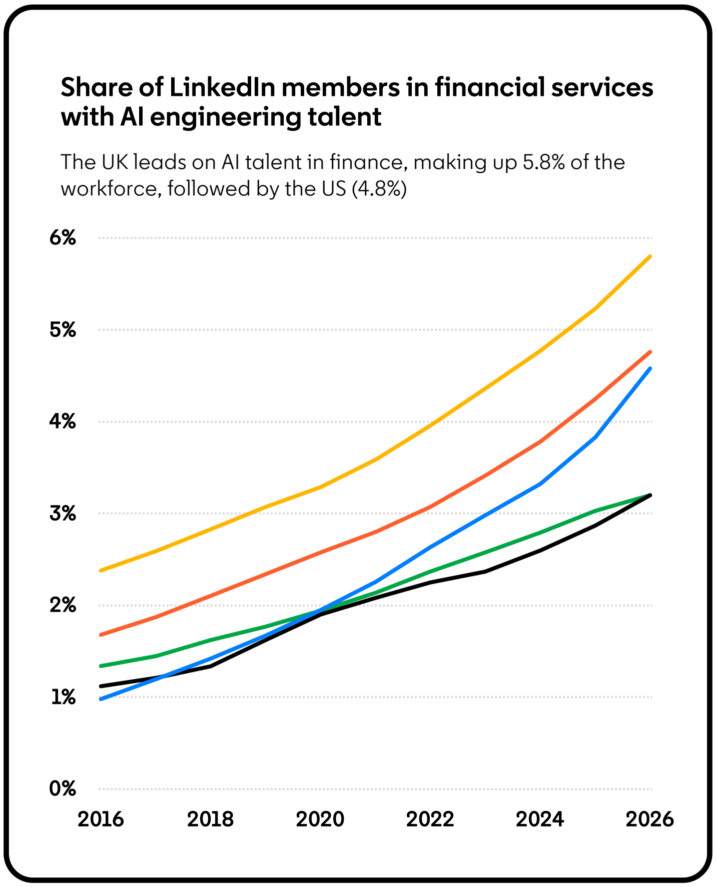


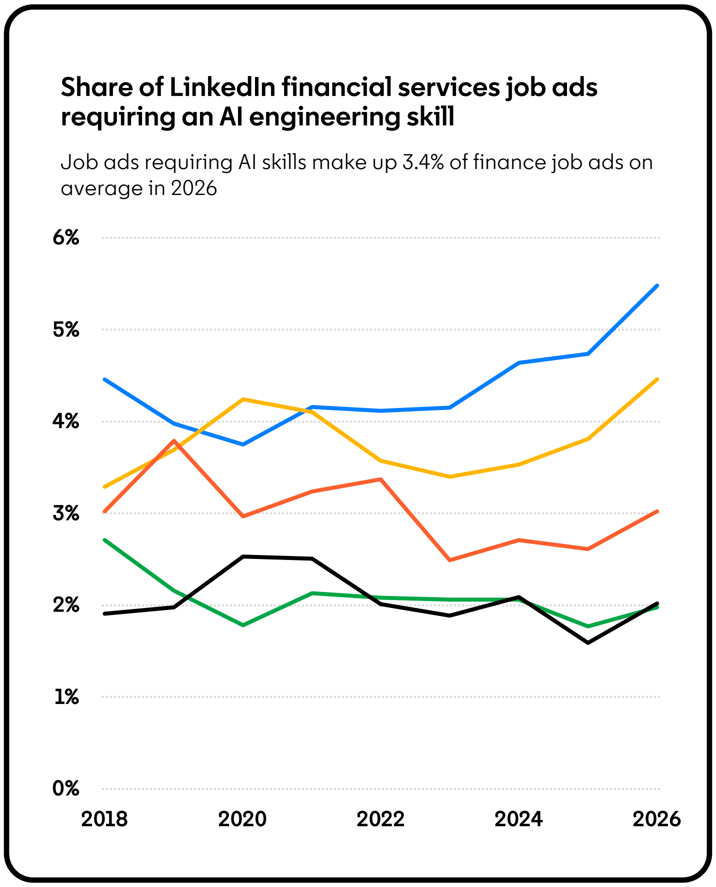
SECTOR DEEP DIVE: FINANCE IS UPSKILLING IN AI AND HIRING FEWER-ENTRY LEVEL WORKERS

Finance's AI talent makes up ~6% of its workforce, as demand for AI skills sees a jump in 2026. The UK has the highest share of AI talent in finance (5.8%), followed by the US (4.8%) and India (4.6%), with France and Germany at 3.2%. While all markets have seen significant growth, India's workforce has more than quadrupled since 2016, with the largest single-year jump this year (+0.75 points). We saw a resurgence in AI hiring demand in 2026, as India (with 5.5% of job ads requiring an AI skill) and the UK (4.5%) reached new highs in demand for AI skills; while the US (3.0%), France (2.0%) and Germany (2.0%) rebounded to levels seen several years ago.

Fastest growing AI engineering skill in finance	
France	Large Language Models (LLM)
Germany	AI Strategy
India	Automated Machine Learning (AutoML)
United Kingdom	AI Strategy
United States	Spring AI

Finance hiring contracted by -13% YoY in June on average. As AI-skilled talent claims a growing share of a smaller hiring pool, firms appear to be prioritizing capability over scale. The fastest growing AI engineering skills point to a sector increasingly focused on deployment and integration in the US, France, and India, while the UK and Germany are placing greater emphasis on AI Strategy. This shift may be putting pressure on the early career pipeline: entry-level finance hiring fell faster than the sector overall in the UK (-16.3% YoY vs -12.5%), Germany (-16.9% vs -14.3%), France (-17.6% vs -15.5%) and India (-15.7% vs -14.0%). The US is the lone exception, with entry-level hiring holding up marginally better than the sector overall (-8.1% vs -8.8%). Yet green shoots remain, with demand for roles like Finance Specialist up 23% YoY last quarter in the UK.





France Germany India United Kingdom United States

APPENDIX

Methodology

AI Talent. A LinkedIn member is considered AI talent if they add at least two AI skills to their profile and/or they have ever held an AI occupation.

The LinkedIn Hiring Rate (LHR) is a measure of hires divided by LinkedIn membership in the country. This analysis looks at the changes in hiring rate between this month and the same month in the previous year. This is based on members' profile updates using the start date of a new job.

LinkedIn AI job posts. A job post is labelled as requiring AI talent if it either (i) lists at least two AI engineering skills, or (ii) is associated with an AI occupation. Talent demand is defined as the proportion of all job post in a country that meet these criteria.

AI Talent Concentration. The counts of AI talent are used to calculate talent concentration metrics, e.g., to calculate the country-level AI talent concentration, we use the counts of AI talent in a country divided by the counts of LinkedIn members in that respective country.

AI-Exposure Occupations. Augmented occupations require a mixture of skills that are AI replicable and human-centric, disrupted occupations utilize skills largely replicable by AI, and insulated occupations use few AI replicable skills.

Further reading

AI Labor Market Update (April 2026)

AI Labor Market Update (Jan 2026)

AI Data Partnerships - LinkedIn Methodology (2026)