



Talent in the Australian Public Sector

Securing the skilled professionals
to transform the nation

“The Australian Public Service (APS) is a resilient and effective institution. Its operating environment is complex and challenging. The digital revolution, an ageing population, the end of the resources boom and the need to balance forward budgets are among the long list of contemporary challenges the APS must address. Australians want services from government with similar features to those they receive from the private sector: fast, online, personalised, competitively priced and open to feedback. My view is that the APS is well positioned to meet the priorities for 2016 and beyond but it cannot be complacent about its success.”

The Honourable John Lloyd PSM

Australian Public Service Commissioner

30 November 2015¹

1. Australian Public Service Commission / *State of the Service Report* / 2014-2015

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Introduction

Australian governments are actively working to reinvent the public sector for the digital age. The goal is to create a sector that can meet the public's ever-increasing expectation for fast and personalised government services while keeping the nation safe from new cyber threats.

The challenge of achieving this mirrors the pressure the private sector has faced over the past 15 years as digital disruption has reinvented – and continues to reinvent – one industry sector after another. The key to successfully navigating these challenges is to focus on the talent needed to make change a reality. In turn, the public sector must successfully compete with the private sector to secure the right people to support its transformation activities.

This report explores how the public sector can compete for talent in key areas by looking at the activity of professionals on LinkedIn. More than 7 million Australian professionals have a LinkedIn profile, which they use to connect and communicate with organisations and other professionals, promote their professional brand and identify opportunities.

To illustrate trends and key points, we focus on three roles that are particularly important in today's more digital economy and therefore of particular interest to government employers: IT and Cyber Security Specialists; User Interface and Experience (UI/UX) Designers; and Data Scientists. (See Methodology for further detail.)

The key to successfully navigating these challenges is to focus on the talent needed to make change a reality.

Our key findings show that:

- the public sector is seeing a loss of talent to the private sector; over the past year, 1.8 times the number of professionals on LinkedIn moved from the public sector to the private sector than the other way;
- digital-related specialists, who are disproportionately located in major cities, are more interested in work-life balance and care more about finding a job where they can make an impact, which can be a perfect fit for the public sector;
- Australia is benefiting from an influx of IT talent from countries including India and New Zealand, but also losing people with these skills to the United States;
- the best way to find quality candidates is by taking a proactive approach to identifying and contacting individuals with the right skills, including taking time to focus on students and recent graduates.

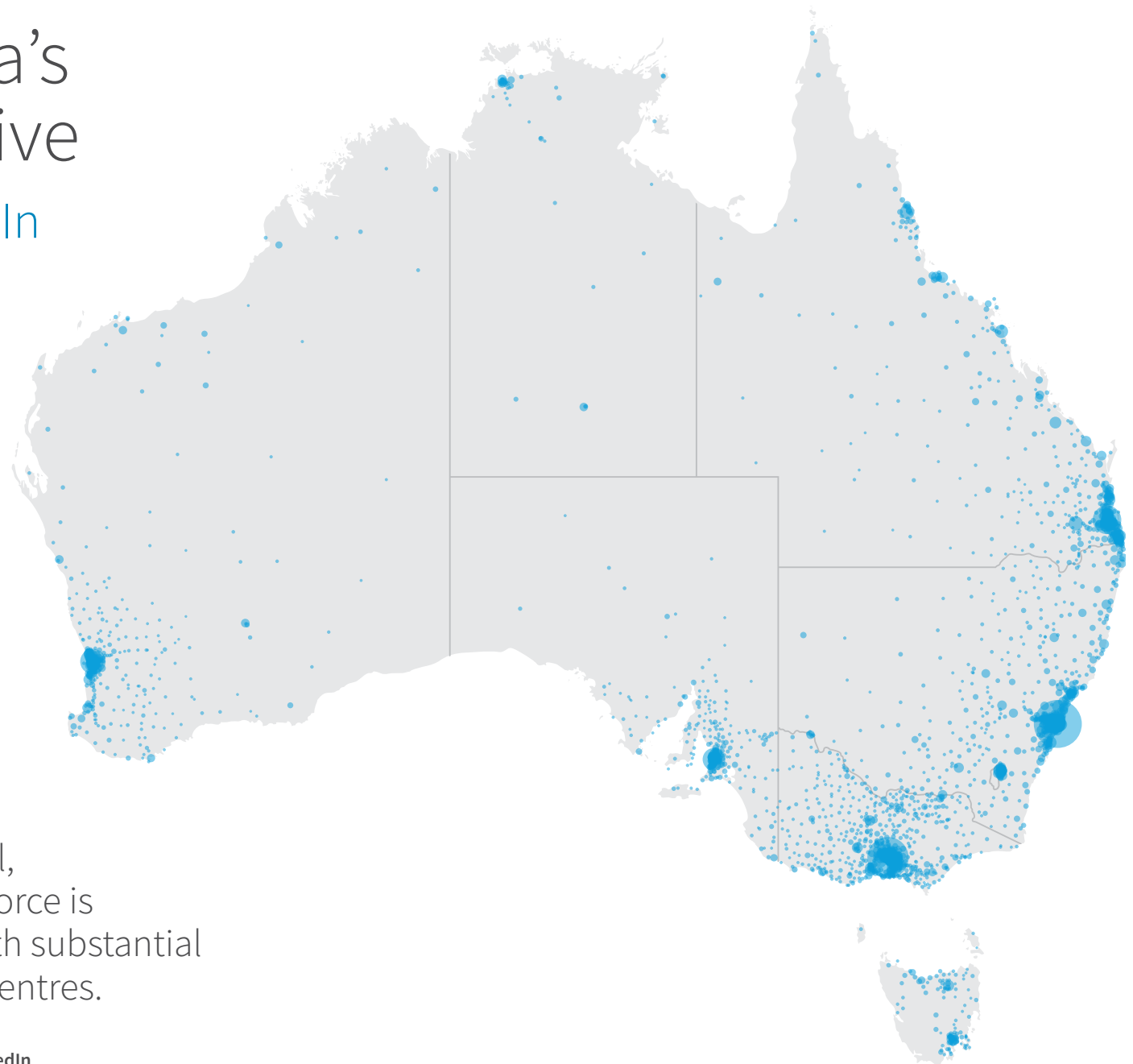
How well and quickly government departments are able to transform their operations in the digital age will have a profound impact on the economy and the welfare of all Australians. We hope this report provides a unique insight into talent in Australia, and illustrates how agencies can take a proactive and data-driven approach to facing the current environment head-on.



Finding the best talent

Where Australia's professionals live

Top regions on LinkedIn



Like the population in general, Australia's professional workforce is spread around the nation, with substantial concentrations in the major centres.

Figure 1: Where professionals live – top regions on LinkedIn

Note: Bubble size indicates number of members per region.

Source: LinkedIn data as at April 2016

Professionals are moving to cities

Although governments often seek to foster employment in regional areas, our research shows that cities continue to draw a net inflow of LinkedIn members – and that the largest cities have the strongest pull.

Some 1.1 million professionals on LinkedIn reside outside the major capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.



◀ Figure 2: Regional talent flows over the past year

Darwin has received the lowest net inflow of Australian members from regional Australia in the last 12 months.

Melbourne has received the greatest net inflow of Australian members from regional Australia in the last 12 months.

Note: This diagram is an indication of the number of Australian members who have updated the location on their profile. For example, a member who updates their profile when they move to Sydney will be reflected in the Inflow for Sydney.

Source: LinkedIn member profile updates between April 2015 and March 2016

Professionals are moving to Australia

One tried-and-tested solution to talent shortages is to encourage the immigration of skilled professionals.

With this in mind, recent policy changes have been made to improve Australia's connection to other innovative economies. This may result in changes to the visa system, clearing the way for more entrepreneurial and research talent to come to the country.²

Our analysis shows that Australia is a net importer of technology-related talent. India is Australia's richest source of IT professionals, followed at some distance by New Zealand, the Philippines and Brazil. Australian IT professionals are moving to the United States, though not in such large numbers, reinforcing the importance of government measures aimed at stemming this brain drain and encouraging more Australians to study science, technology, engineering and maths.

² www.innovation.gov.au/page/national-innovation-and-science-agenda-report



Professionals are moving to the private sector

Our research also shows that a significant proportion of Australian professionals are leaving the public sector for the private sector. Over the past 12 months, 1.8 times more LinkedIn members moved from the public sector to the private sector than the other way.

Figure 4: Talent flows between sectors ►

Australian members hired in the last 12 months

Private sector to public sector hires

1.8x more members were hired into the private sector from the public sector than were hired into the public sector from the private sector in the last 12 months.

Public sector to private sector hires

Note: This diagram reflects changes in members' profiles, specifically when they change employers.

Source: LinkedIn member profile updates between April 2015 and March 2016



Securing the talent to support digital transformation

Identifying key professionals

The public sector needs professionals with a significant range of capabilities to support its efforts to modernise and reinvent its operations. For the purposes of this report, we've focused on three roles in strong demand among all organisations seeking to transform for the digital age:

- IT and Cyber Security Specialists – individuals with deep computing and networking expertise;
- UI/UX Designers – the experts who define and improve how citizens interact with online services offered by government;
- Data Scientists – those who analyse large data sets to identify trends, issues and opportunities.

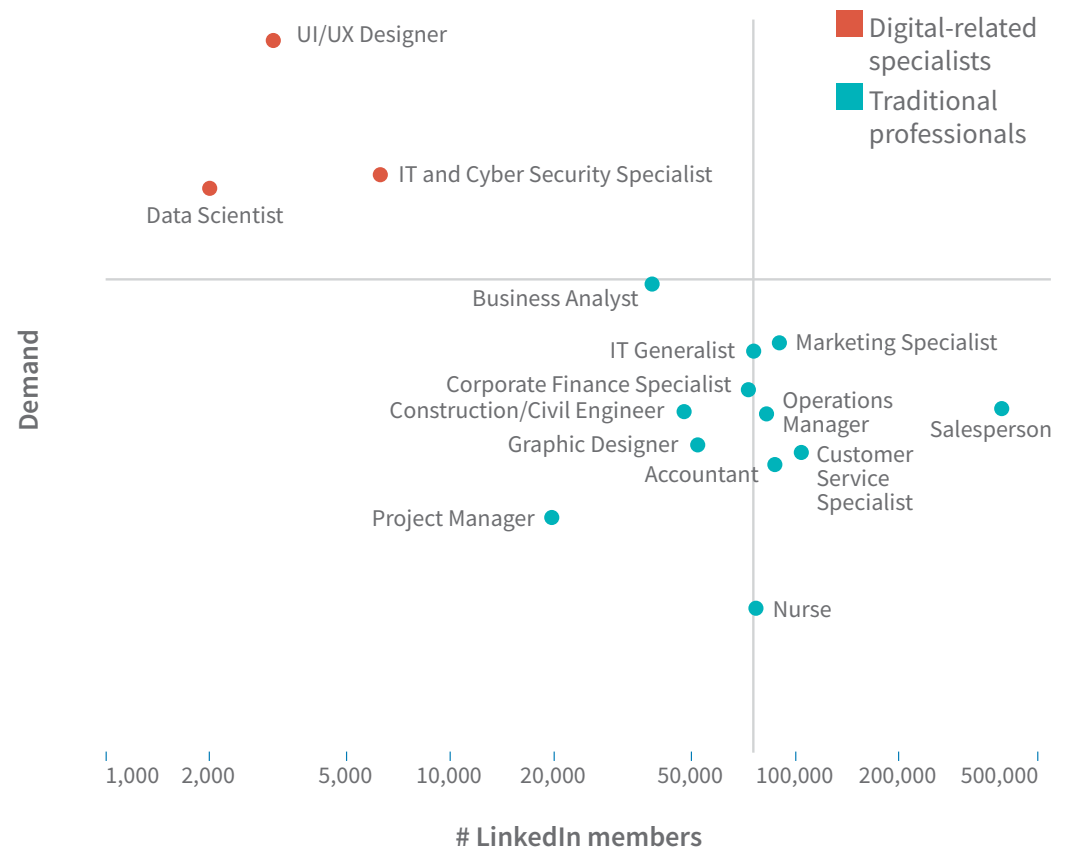
Understanding demand

When it comes to finding the right professionals for the public sector's specialised and changing needs – especially in this era of digital transformation – it's valuable to know where to look in terms of geography and occupation.

Demand is fierce across the public and private sectors for individuals with expertise in cyber security, digital design and data science. As Figure 5 shows, in the past 12 months and relative to the number of people working in field, the demand from recruiters for talent with expertise in cyber security, UI/UX design and data science was on average 6 times the demand for IT Generalist professionals.

It also pays to look beyond the active jobseekers to people who are currently working and not actively seeking a new role, as we discuss in the next section.

Figure 5: Digital professionals are in high demand compared to other types of professionals



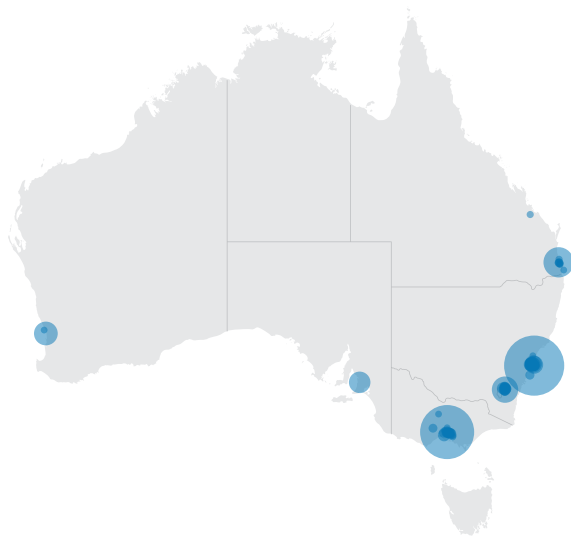
Note: Demand is determined by Recruiter Activity on LinkedIn – i.e. a higher demand index means that professionals in that occupation are receiving relatively more contact from recruiters than their peers in other occupations on the matrix. Supply is determined by the number of members in that occupation on LinkedIn.

Source: LinkedIn data as at April 2016

Finding talent by location

Our analysis also shows that professionals in the high-demand areas of cyber security, digital design and data science are to be found almost exclusively in the major cities.

Figure 6: Where to find IT and Cyber Security Specialists



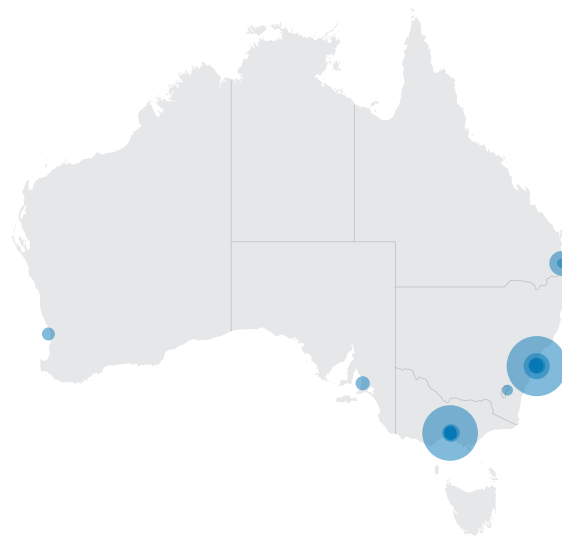
Number of Members



Note: Bubble size indicates number of members per region.

Source: LinkedIn data as at April 2016

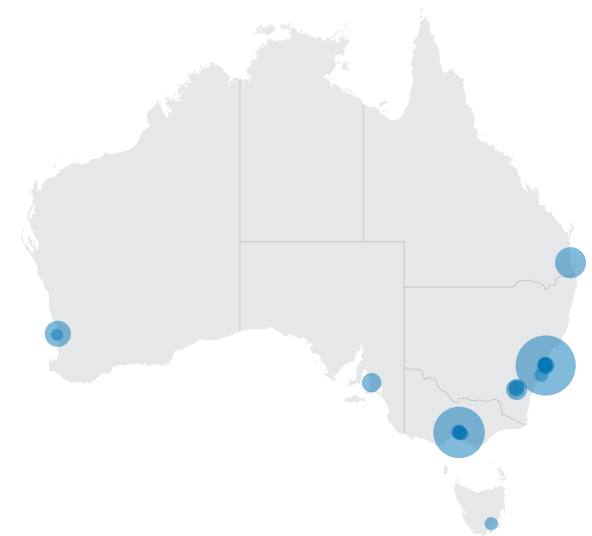
Figure 7: Where to find UI/UX Designers



Number of Members



Figure 8: Where to find Data Scientists



Number of Members



Expanding the talent pool

If public sector leaders want to become more strategic about building talent that will lead digital transformation, one avenue to consider is expanding the talent pool by reskilling professionals in occupations adjacent to those of high-demand professionals.

We have pinpointed the closest occupations to the three high demand roles by analysing overlapping skillsets. These occupations represent a large, low-demand talent pool from which recruiting is likely to be quick and cost-effective.

Figure 9: Alternative talent pools to those of high-demand professionals

High-demand professionals	Most in-demand skill	Occupations with most professionals with this skill
UI/UX Designers	Mobile development	Software Developers
IT and Cyber Security Specialists	Mac, Linux and Unix Systems	Information Technology System Administrator/Engineer
Data Scientists	Cloud and distributed computing	Software Developers

Note: Demand is determined by Recruiter Activity on LinkedIn – i.e. a higher in demand skills means that professionals with that skill are receiving relatively more contact from recruiters than their peers without that skill.

Source: LinkedIn data as at April 2016

How to attract the best talent



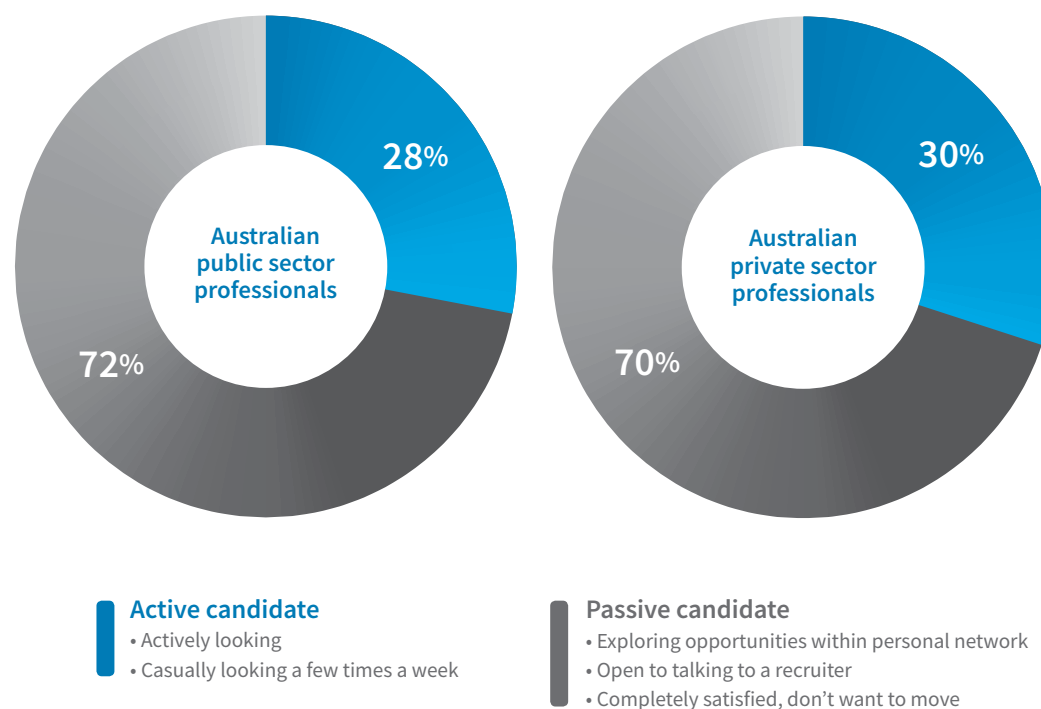
Focus on the private sector ...

Our analysis suggests that public sector organisations seeking professionals to help transform government for the digital age should expect to recruit heavily from the private sector. This makes sense given that only one in six Australians works in the public sector and the business sector has been investing heavily in digital transformation for more than a decade.

... and on the passive majority

Another potential big win for the public sector is in targeting individuals who are currently working and not actively seeking a new role – what we call passive talent. As Figure 10 shows, at any given time, only 28 per cent of public sector professionals and 30 per cent of private sector professionals are looking for a new job. This means the largest part of the professional workforce – especially those with skills that are in high demand, such as digital and data experts – may not see or engage with public sector job adverts unless they are proactively targeted.

Figure 10: Most Australian professionals aren't actively looking for a new job





Note: Candidates are classified as active or passive based on their answer to the question "How would you classify your current job search status?"

Source: LinkedIn Q3 2015 Talent Drivers survey

Understand what professionals want

The first step in winning over any employee – especially people currently working in the private sector – is to understand what the employee wants. Only then is it possible to craft a suitable employer brand message.

The good news for public sector employers is that there is a high correlation between what individuals say they want and what the public sector can typically offer – such as work-life balance, challenging work, job security and the ability to make a social or economic impact.

 Australian public sector professionals
 Australian private sector professionals

Source: LinkedIn Q3 2015 Talent Drivers Survey; 1,439 Australian public sector respondents and 13,010 Australian private sector respondents



Figure 11: What matters to professionals in the public and private sectors



Understand how digital professionals differ

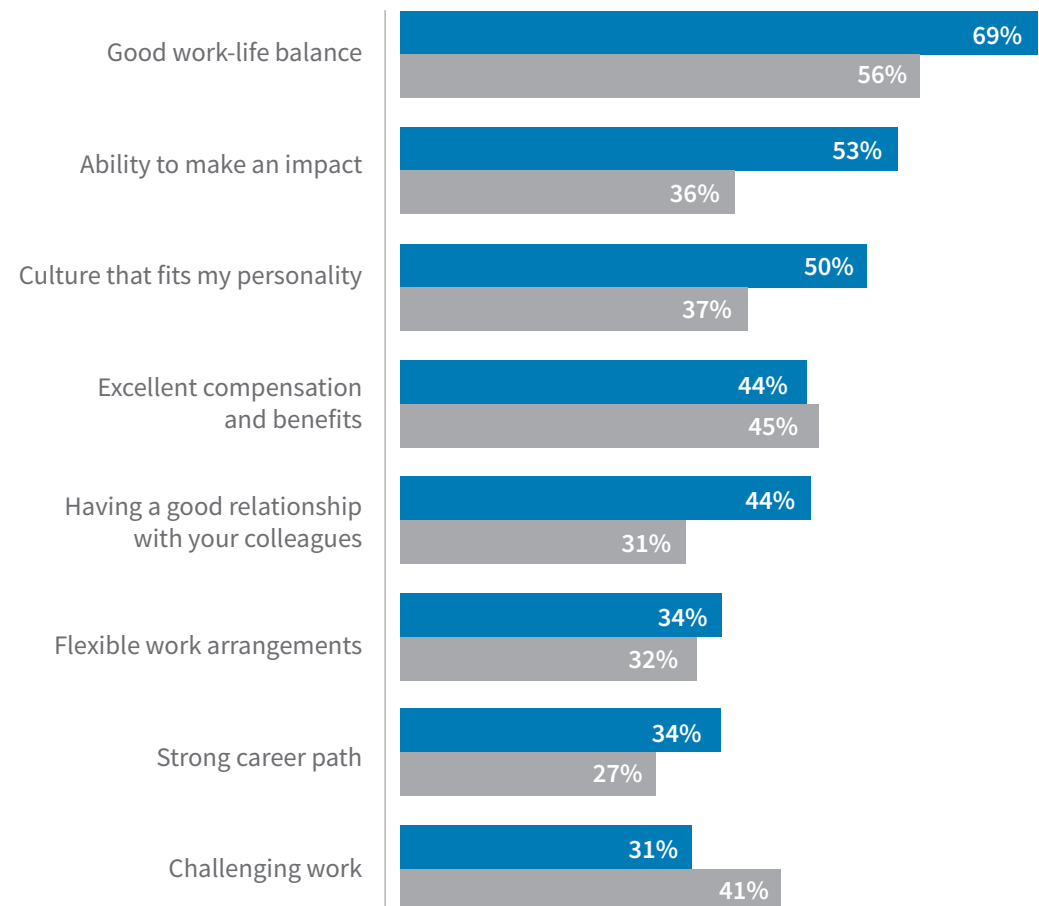
It's also possible to focus specifically on the preferences of those in high-demand technology-based roles. This analysis reveals even stronger preferences than in the general professional population.

For example, UI/UX Designers are especially interested in work-life balance and finding jobs where they can make an impact, making them a perfect fit for public sector roles. Recruiters should emphasise these points when attempting to attract these professionals.

 Australian UI/UX Designers
 Australian professionals

Source: LinkedIn Q3 2015 Talent Drivers Survey; 32 UI/UX Designer respondents and 14,450 Australian professional respondents

Figure 12: UI/UX Designers want balance and to make an impact



Keep gender in mind

LinkedIn's wider research highlights that there are often differences of preference between male and female employees on issues such as workplace flexibility, culture and compensation. This level of analysis should further inform recruitment strategies.

Figure 13: Flexible work arrangements are important to female professionals




■ Australian female professionals
■ Australian male professionals

Source: LinkedIn Q3 2015 Talent Drivers Survey; 4,834 Australian female professional respondents and 9,460 Australian professional male respondents

Looking to
the future





Graduates are another key source of talent. The public sector offers a chance to develop professional and personal skills, a diverse career through a range of jobs, great working conditions and an opportunity to contribute to the community.

The offer of good salaries, excellent leave conditions, flexible work practices (including the option to negotiate work hours) and the breadth of available roles in government are attractive to many students.

“The first thing I think of regarding working in the public sector is job security. It’s a topic very much subject to opinion, but what I’ve always heard floating around is that if you want security and balance in life, go public.”

Breanna Cuniffe, Craik Group honours student at the University of Queensland’s Institute for Molecular Bioscience

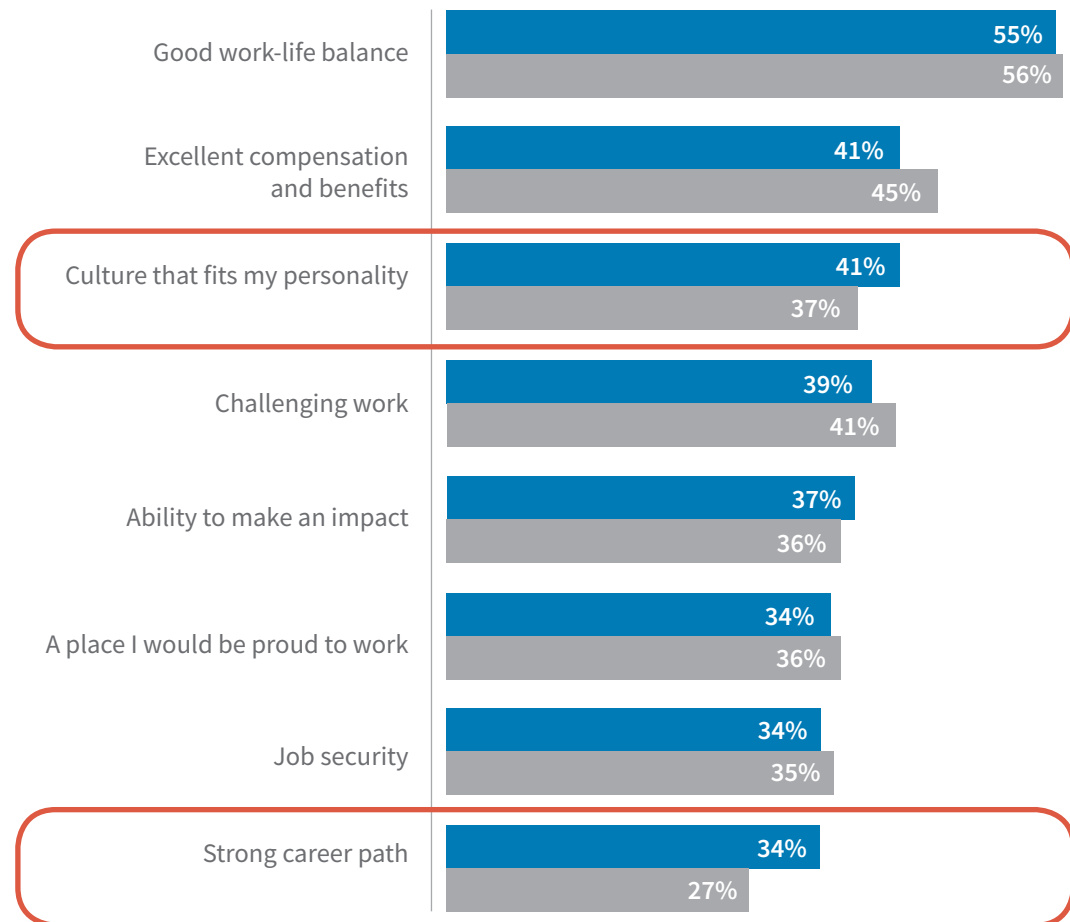
Attract graduates

According to the Australian Public Service Commission, graduates are more likely to rate long-term career progression as an issue when considering a public sector role and are less likely to rate the geographic location of the job as important. They are also more likely to rate the security and stability of the job as important, as well as their professional development.³

Our research confirms that a strong career path is much more important for recent graduates than the wider professional population. Today's graduates are especially interested in work-life balance, compensation and benefits, and the culture of their future workplaces.

Recent Australian graduates
Australian professionals

Figure 14: Graduates want strong career paths



3. Australian Public Service Commission / *State of the Service Report* / 2014-2015

Source: LinkedIn Q3 2015 Talent Drivers Survey; 2,003 recent Australian graduate respondents and 14,450 Australian professional respondents

Focus on students with digital skills

But what about our target skill areas?

LinkedIn data shows that UNSW, RMIT, UTS, Monash and Sydney Uni are among the top places to look for technology graduates, interestingly, we're seeing the rise of educational disruptors as well, with the top educational provider for UI /UX Designers being General Assembly, which currently offers a 10 week course in UX design.

The top fields of study amongst these graduates illustrate that graduates are seeing more fluid pathways from university into the workforce, with a traditional degree not necessarily limiting graduates to specific roles. For hiring managers, ensuring that each individual is assessed on merit and potential, rather than their educational background, is paramount.

Figure 15: Where and what IT and Cyber Security Specialists, UI/UX Designers and Data Scientists are studying

Top 5 institutions	Top 5 fields of study
IT and Cyber Security Specialists	IT and Cyber Security Specialists
1 UNSW Australia	1 Computer Science
2 RMIT University	2 Information Science and Technology
3 Monash University	3 Electronics
4 University of Technology Sydney	4 Business Management and Administration
5 Charles Sturt University	5 Electrical Engineering
UI/UX Designers	UI/UX Designers
1 General Assembly	1 Illustration and Graphic Design
2 Swinburne University of Technology	2 Media
3 RMIT University	3 Information Science and Technology
4 University of Technology Sydney	4 Computer Science
5 University of Sydney	5 Marketing
Data Scientists	Data Scientists
1 UNSW Australia	1 Computer Science
2 University of Sydney	2 Information Science and Technology
3 University of Melbourne	3 Mathematics
4 Monash University	4 Physics
5 The University of Queensland	5 Biology

A high-angle, slightly blurred photograph of two business professionals, a man and a woman, walking down a modern staircase. The woman, in the foreground, is wearing a dark blazer and glasses, looking down at a tablet device. The man, slightly behind her, is also in business attire and carrying a black briefcase. The staircase has a glass railing and a light-colored floor. The background is a bright, out-of-focus interior space.

Key takeaways

Seek the
right skills

1

Identify the skills your organisation needs to transform for the digital age so it can continue to meet or exceed citizens' expectations.

Engage
passive
talent

2

Locate the professionals with these desired skills, especially within the private sector and among 'passive talent' – people who may not be actively looking for a new position.

Sell your
strengths

3

Understand what your target employees value in a job and emphasise the areas your organisation is well placed to offer.

Educate
future
talent

4

The public sector can offer many of the things graduates value, so make sure they know it.

An overhead photograph of a business meeting around a large wooden table. Several people in business attire are seated around the table, with their hands and arms visible. Each person has a notepad and pen in front of them. Sunlight streams in from the left, casting long, sharp shadows across the table. A semi-transparent white rounded rectangle is centered over the image, containing the word "Methodology" in a white serif font.

Methodology

Methodology

The insights and analysis in this report represent the world as seen through the lens of LinkedIn data, specifically the more than 7 million Australian member profiles as at April 2016. As such, it is influenced by how professionals choose to use the site, which can vary based on professional, social and regional culture, as well as overall site availability and accessibility.

This report also draws on findings from the LinkedIn Talent Drivers Survey. This study is undertaken annually and involves a representative sample of LinkedIn members. In the third calendar quarter of 2015, more than 350,000 professionals in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa and North America responded to the survey.

Role descriptions

We used the following role descriptions in researching this report.

IT and Cyber Security Specialists

Based on the LinkedIn standardised ‘IT Security Specialist’ and keyword searches across titles for ‘cyber security’, ‘network security’ and ‘digital security’.

UI/UX Designers

Based on the LinkedIn standardised ‘User Interface/User Experience Designer’ occupation, including titles such as User Experience Architect, User Interface Designer, Usability Engineer, Information Designer and Interface Designer.

Data Scientists

Based on keyword searches across titles, headlines and profiles for ‘data scientist’.

Public and private sector

An individual is considered to be employed in the public sector if their employer lists their company type as a ‘government agency’ or in the ‘government’ industry.

Recent graduates

Professionals are defined as ‘recent graduates’ if they completed their education in the previous three years.

About LinkedIn Talent Solutions

LinkedIn Talent Solutions offers a full range of recruiting solutions to help organisations of all sizes find, attract, and engage the best talent. Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With over 433 million members worldwide, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.



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