

Press release

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Employers are willing to pay up to a 31% salary premium to candidates holding in-demand skills

- Up to 37% of Australian employers are willing to offer a higher salary than the market rate to secure candidates who hold in-demand skills
- 26% is the average salary premium that employers are willing to pay to candidates with key skills
- 29% of employers are willing to be flexible when hiring candidates who do not hold specific industry experience while 14% are prepared to bend on the certifications required

Sydney, 11 January 2023 – Australian employers are willing to pay a premium to new hires if it means securing the skills and expertise they require, new independent research by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) finds.

The research reveals candidates may receive a salary offer of up to 31% more than market rates, depending on the skills, certifications and experience employers are looking for across finance, technology and business support functions.

Project and program management skills can command the highest salary premium of almost a third (31%) more than market rate. However, only 11% of employers are willing to offer a higher salary to candidates who hold those skills. Meanwhile, more than a third (37%) of employers are willing to pay a premium to a candidate if they hold leadership or management expertise, revealing it is the skill most in demand. Candidates with such experience may be able to command a salary 26% higher than market rate.

Skill/expertise	% salary premium for a candidate with the skill	% of employers willing to offer a higher salary
Project and program management	31%	11%
Cyber security	27%	15%
Leadership/management	26%	37%
Financial planning and analysis	26%	14%
Employee relations	25%	13%
Customer service	23%	13%

Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 300 business leaders including 100 CFOs, 100 CIOs, and 100 general hiring managers.

*“Employers recognise that candidates who hold these highly sought-after skills bring a unique edge to their organisation and enable it to thrive in times of rapid change,” says **Nicole Gorton, Director at Robert Half.***

“These types of premiums and salary increase are not on offer to everyone. Business leaders are looking for staff who can propel innovation and swiftly adapt to changing conditions. They are willing to pay a salary premium because of the pivotal role the candidate will play in steering companies towards growth as well as maintaining a distinct competitive edge. Employers see the salary premiums as an investment in amplifying efficiencies, reshaping outcomes and securing a prosperous future.”

Employers are willing to bend on some criteria

Employers recognise that it may be hard to source candidates that tick every box listed on their job description and are willing to be flexible with certain experience and certifications, if the candidate still provides advantages in other areas.

The research reveals:

- 29% of employers will bend on specific industry experience
- 28% of employers will be flexible in regards to number of years of experience
- 14% of employers are prepared to be flexible about certifications
- 8% of employers will be flexible about the required education

Meanwhile, there are particular areas in which more than half of employers state that a candidate must hold a certification to be considered for the role.

In finance, the top 5 fields in which employers say certifications are necessary are:

- Finance and accounting (75%)
- Financial accounting and business advisory (70%)
- Management accounting and strategic financial management (64%)
- Taxation (62%)
- Risk management, governance and control (54%)

In technology, the top 5 fields in which employers say certifications are necessary are:

- Security, privacy and compliance (64%)
- Cloud architecture and operations (55%)
- Network and systems administration (54%)
- Software and application development (50%)
- Technology process automation (50%)

“Employers recognise that the right skills not only enable employees to fulfil the basic requirements of the position but can invigorate a team and elevate projects. Therefore, employers are open to hiring candidates who hold the right skill set, even if their experience in the industry is relatively limited.

“However, certifications still provide tangible proof that a candidate has expertise in key areas, which is particularly necessary for industries such as finance and technology, as they require a high degree of accuracy and regulatory compliance. These credentials validate a candidate’s ability to navigate complex frameworks, as well as assure employers that they possess the in-depth knowledge and proficiency necessary for success in these demanding sectors,” concluded **Gorton**.

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Notes to editors

About the research

The study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted online in June 2023 by an independent research company, surveying 300 hiring managers, including 100 CFOs and 100 CIOs, from companies

across Australia. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management, and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the global, specialised talent solutions provider that helps employers find their next great hire and jobseekers uncover their next opportunity. Robert Half offers both contract and permanent placement services, and is the parent company of Protiviti, a global consulting firm. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth, and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

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