Workforce Report

Our data and insights support your recruiting success.

July 2026 – Spotlight on hot jobs

The big picture

Leaders are turning up demand, and the labor market is answering with more complexity than clarity.

In the U.S., employer appetite has been building for months, but the signals suggest it is getting harder to turn that intent into hires. Openings are rising while the candidate pool at the top of the funnel is thinner than last year, leaving recruiters to reconcile ambitious growth plans with fewer applicants and a tougher fight for quality.

EMEA is showing a related pattern. Employer demand for talent is strong and has spiked in recent months, yet hiring is no longer tracking cleanly with the roles being posted. Application activity has eased, so recruiting teams are being asked to support more openings from a weaker pipeline, which puts pressure on both speed and standards.

This month, the spotlight is on hot jobs across healthcare, manufacturing and finance sectors and high-volume hiring roles. Across those sectors, growth is concentrating in roles that carry the most weight for patient care, production, revenue and frontline operations. The story is not just that openings are up, but that organizations are making sharper bets on specific jobs to power growth while the market becomes harder to execute in.

TOP FINDINGS

U.S. employer demand continues to outpace hiring, with an increase of 19% in openings year-over-year while hiring stays relatively flat for the third consecutive month.

27%⇧

In EMEA, job openings jumped 27% higher over the 12-month rolling period. Concerns continue as both hiring and applications struggle to keep up.

50%⇧

Revenue-driving and strategic finance roles are driving the hot jobs in finance with an average of 50% growth year-over-year.

ICIMS Insights Workforce Reports monitor monthly labor market activity based on hundreds of millions of applicants and millions of users. Organizations can use this data as a measuring stick to anticipate and adapt to ever-changing workforce dynamics.

Growth in openings continues as hiring struggles to keep pace

US PLATFORM INDICATORS | Job openings, applications and hires | June 2025–June 2026

ICIMS INSIGHTS QUICK TAKE:
Openings increased while application volume declines compared to June 2025.

MARKET UPDATE

June continues a pattern that has been building since early spring. Openings were up 19% over the June 2025 baseline while hiring also increased, now sitting at 6%. On its own, that signals a healthy labor market. The tension appears in the gap between the two, as demand is rising faster than organizations are converting that demand into hires.

The top of the funnel remains soft. Application volume is running 5% below the June 2025 baseline and has not recovered since its peak in January. This creates a persistent imbalance. Employers are posting more roles while drawing from a smaller active candidate pool, increasing competition for talent and slowing momentum in the hiring process.

Despite widespread layoff headlines, the data points to redistribution with a growing volume of open roles, not contraction. Roles are shifting across functions, geographies and skills. The market remains active, but execution is harder.

STRATEGY

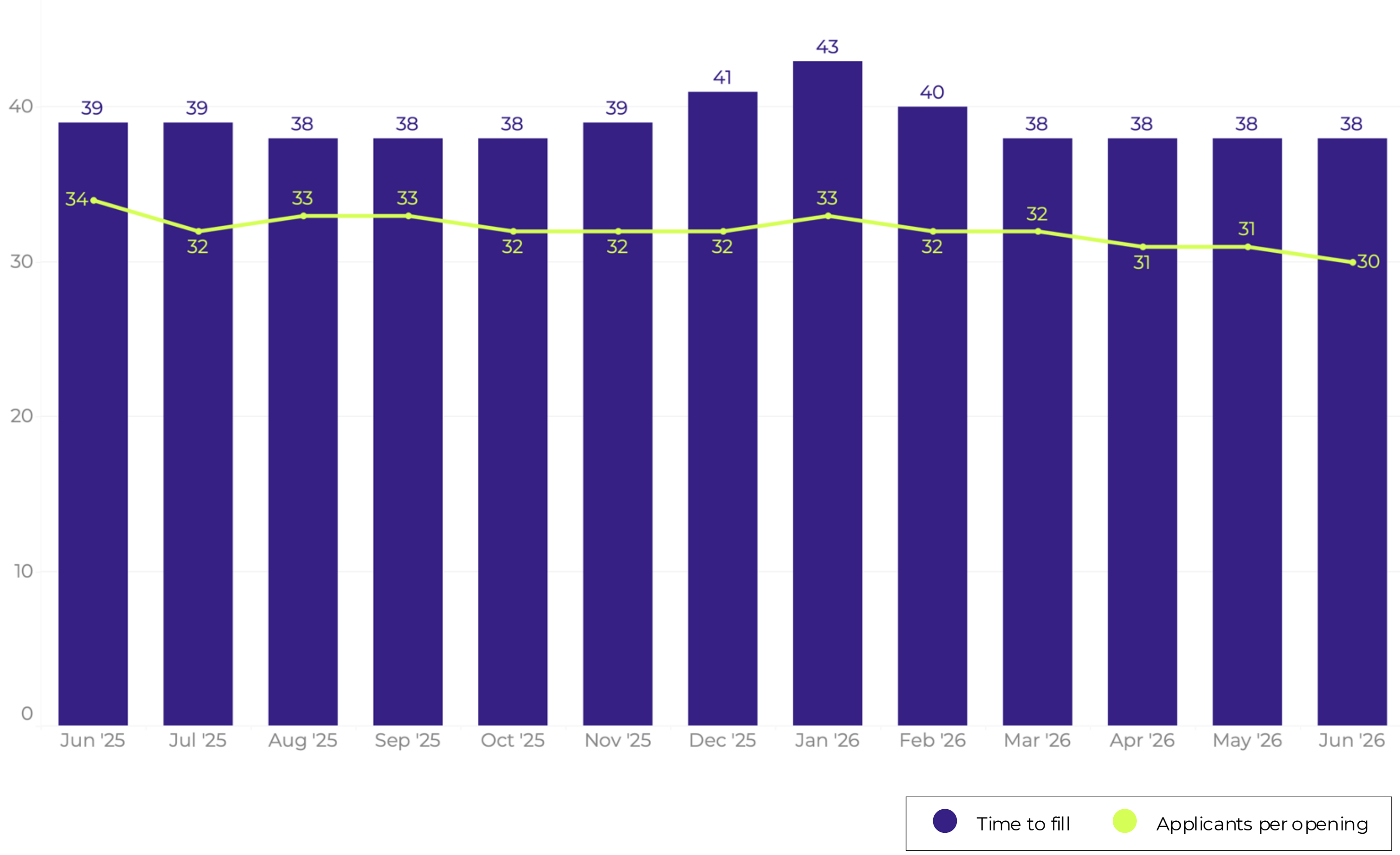
Many recruiting teams are managing more open requisitions than they can effectively support. Establishing stricter intake discipline and clear prioritization with hiring managers can reduce this strain. Focusing on a smaller set of critical roles can improve speed and hiring outcomes.

Decision speed should also become a primary focus. Delays in communication continue to be a major source of lost candidates. Organizations that set clear expectations for rapid feedback, often within the same day, see measurable improvements in acceptance rates and time to fill.

Recruiter capacity should be aligned to roles that drive the most enterprise value and tie directly to current business objectives. Spreading effort evenly across all openings dilutes impact. High-performing teams partner with business leaders to prioritize mission-critical roles, concentrating recruiter time and decision support there while slowing or reshaping work on lower-impact requisitions.

Recruiters face rising demand, fewer applicants and limited room to speed hiring up

US TIME TO FILL AND APPLICANTS PER OPENING | June 2025–June 2026



"Average applicants per opening in the U.S. have held near 32, dipping to 30 in June, while time to fill has stayed flat. That pattern suggests the growing gap between openings and hires is starting to constrain recruiters. With fewer applicants per role, teams are not slowing down, but they are also not speeding up, which signals that demand is outpacing the capacity to move talent faster through the funnel."

TRENT COTTON
Head of Talent Insights,
ICIMS

Openings surge ahead of hiring as EMEA's candidate pool thins

EMEA PLATFORM INDICATORS | Job openings, applications and hires | June 2025–June 2026

ICIMS INSIGHTS QUICK TAKE:
A slight rebound in hiring but it is not keeping up with the growth in openings.

MARKET UPDATE

EMEA has spent the first half of the year with openings consistently above the June 2025 baseline, capped by a sharp jump in June with a 27% year-over-year increase. Hiring has largely kept pace, briefly dipping below in May before recovering to an 8% increase in June. The concern sits in the growing distance between openings and hires at the very moment application volume is weakening. Applications fell to 16% in June, continuing a slide from a 30%+ growth in March.

Prior to May and June, hiring trends roughly mirrored openings, helped by stronger application volume earlier in the year. Now, with openings pulling away and applications thinning, recruiters are being asked to do more with less at the top of the funnel.

The risk is not just longer time to fill but more strain on teams to maintain quality when every qualified applicant matters more. In this environment, maintaining pace requires a sharper allocation of effort, not just more activity.

STRATEGY

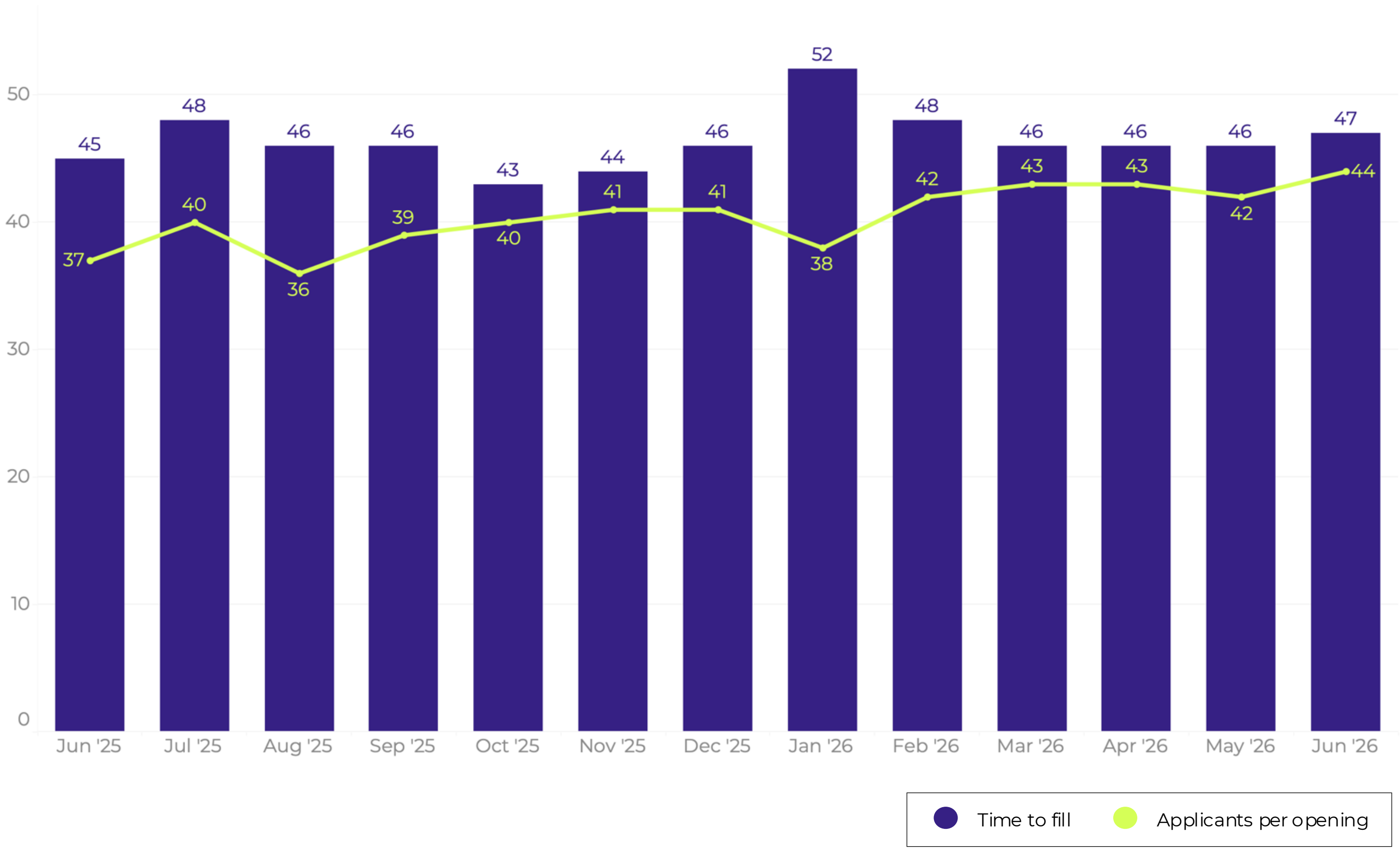
In EMEA, the playbook will need to include process optimization and a candidate reengagement strategy for silver-medalist candidate lists.

With openings rising faster than hires and applications, the priority is to narrow the work. Recruiters should partner with business leaders to explicitly rank roles by current strategic value, then concentrate capacity on the few that matter most while slowing or pausing lower-impact requisitions. It is counterinitiative but this will increase velocity and could potentially lessen the gap.

Where new roles resemble those filled in the past year, teams can use past interview-stage candidates as an immediate source of qualified shortlists, offsetting weaker application volume without starting from scratch. From there, the focus shifts to conversion: clearer role messaging, tighter interview loop, and faster, more aligned decisions on what "qualified" means for priority roles.

Recruiters face rising demand, fewer applicants and limited room to speed hiring up

EMEA TIME TO FILL AND APPLICANTS PER OPENING | June 2025–June 2026



"Even as application volume has eased, average applicants per opening in EMEA remain high, likely reflecting a lag from earlier months' activity. What is changing is time to fill, which rose to 47 days in June. The real test now is whether recruiting teams can tap that prior pipeline to close the gap between openings and hires while pulling time to fill back down."

TRENT COTTON
Head of Talent Insights, ICIMS

REPORT FOCUS

Hot Jobs

In the first half of 2026, the ICIMS data and national data, including the BLS and the JOLTS reports, have been sending a consistent signal: *demand is still strong, hiring is cautious.*

JOLTS data shows job openings holding around 7.6 million in May while hires sit near 5.2 million and change little month to month. This points to a labor market where employers are posting roles but not ramping conversion at the same pace.

Over the same period, BLS payroll data shows steady but moderate job gains and an unemployment rate hovering in the low-to-mid 4% range, with healthcare and related services driving much of the growth.

This month's spotlight is on the hot jobs driving the increase in openings in the first half of the year across healthcare, manufacturing, finance sectors and high-volume hiring roles.

“What I see in the ICIMS data is not a market that has hit the brakes, but one that is making sharper bets on specific roles. High-volume, finance, healthcare and manufacturing all show the same pattern: demand is heating up in the jobs that matter most for growth and operations.

That is good news for recruiters who can connect talent to those priorities, and it leaves far less room for a complicated process or fuzzy hiring decisions.”

TRENT COTTON
Head of
Talent Insights
ICIMS

Finance: Focused job growth

Recent national data (JOLTS) shows that job openings in finance and insurance are lower than a year ago, even while total U.S. openings stay elevated. That points to a sector that is not adding headcount everywhere but making more deliberate choices about where roles get approved.

Concurrently, longer-term projections still have financial occupations growing faster than the average job through 2034, so these roles look like durable parts of the economy, not a short-term spike.

Inside that macro view, ICIMS data gives a clearer read on where finance leaders are focusing job growth. Openings are clustering around a handful of "hot jobs."

Sales and market strategy dominate demand
Finance organizations are heavily prioritizing revenue-driving and strategic roles. Openings for Securities, Commodities and Financial Services Sales Agents lead the sector, with a 52% year-over-year increase. Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists follow closely, with openings up 50% year-over-year.

Analytical expertise remains a top priority
To navigate a complex financial market, teams are investing in professionals who can assess investments and interpret data. Financial and Investment Analysts show a 41% year-over-year increase in job openings, signaling sustained demand for deep analytical skill.

Core operational support holds steady
While front-office and analytical roles drive most of the hiring demand, foundational support teams remain critical to the infrastructure. Openings for First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers are up 17% year-over-year, with Customer Service Representatives up 14% and Computer User Support Specialists up 11%. Together, these roles reinforce the operational backbone finance organizations need to execute on their growth ambitions.

HIGH-GROWTH SPECIALIZED ROLES

52% **Increase for securities & financial sales agents**

This role represents the highest year-over-year growth within the finance sector.

50% **Increase for market research analysts**

Marketing specialists and analysts are seeing nearly double-digit growth in demand.

41% **Increase for financial and investment analysts**

Demand for investment expertise continues to outpace administrative roles.

STEADY-GROWTH SUPPORT ROLES

17% **Increase for office support supervisors**

Administrative leadership roles are growing at a steady, moderate rate.

14% **Increase for customer service representatives**

11% **Increase for computer user support specialists**

Healthcare: The backbone of U.S. job growth

BLS data points to healthcare as one of the steadier anchors of the labor market. Openings remain elevated compared to many other sectors, and longer-term projections still have healthcare occupations growing faster than the average job over the next decade. This data point positions healthcare roles as a durable source of demand, not a short-term swing in headcount.

ICIMS data gives a more specific read on where healthcare leaders are leaning in. Openings are clustering around a handful of "hot jobs" that tell a clear story about how organizations plan to deliver and grow care.

Clinical care anchors demand
Organizations are prioritizing direct patient-care roles to keep pace with utilization and demographic pressure. Openings for core clinical roles such as nurses and frontline allied health professionals show strong year-over-year growth, putting bedside and frontline care at the center of hiring activity. For leaders, the signal is straightforward: access and quality of care still depend first on having enough people at the point of delivery.

Specialized and diagnostic skills gain ground
Employers are also leaning into specialized and diagnostic expertise to handle more complex cases and technology-enabled care. Roles like laboratory, imaging and therapy professionals are seeing notable increases in openings, reflecting demand for talent that can interpret results, support advanced treatments and inform clinical decisions. This concentration suggests the constraint is shifting from general capacity to the availability of high-skill specialists.

Demand is concentrating in patient-facing clinical roles, specialized diagnostic talent and the operational layers that support them. That is where workforce planning and recruiting strategy need to be sharp, because these roles carry most of the weight in how organizations deliver care and absorb future growth.

TOP GROWTH ROLES

27% **Increase for medical equipment preparers**

This role shows the highest year-over-year growth in job openings

24% **Increase for nursing assistants**

Demand for essential patient care support continues to rise

STEADY DEMAND ACROSS THE SECTOR

21% **Increase for technologists and pharmacists**

Both health technologists and pharmacists saw equal growth in openings

14% **Increase for medical records specialists**

Administrative and data-focused roles remain a priority for healthcare systems

10% **Increase for surgical technologists**

Specialized technical roles show consistent upward momentum

What’s hot in manufacturing?

Manufacturing sits in a strange spot in the labor market: demand is lively, but not everywhere, and the tension shows up in the openings data.

According to JOLTs data, manufacturing job openings started 2026 near the half-million mark, up 11% year-over-year, while hires and separations declined. Employment nudged up in January, dipped in February and recovered some ground in March, pointing to selective rather than broad-based expansion. Longer-term projections still see solid opportunities in advanced production, engineering and maintenance, even as overall job growth is driven more by sectors like healthcare.

Sales and frontline leadership anchor demand

Demand for frontline leadership is surging, with openings for First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers up 59% year over year. That points to a constraint not just in equipment or supply chains, but in the people who can run teams, manage throughput and keep lines stable. In a market where openings outpace hires, supervisors are a primary lever for productivity and safety.

Technical and operational expertise remains a top priority

Industrial Engineers show a 39% year-over-year increase in openings, and General Maintenance and Repair Workers are up 30%. Those gains signal a push for smarter processes and more reliable uptime, from system design to day-to-day repairs that prevent costly downtime. Future capacity is being built as much through better systems and maintenance as through added headcount.

Core production support holds steady

Openings for All Other Production Workers have increased 29% year-over-year, even in a sector that is not expanding uniformly. Manufacturers still need hands on the line to execute what engineers and supervisors design. The message for readers is straightforward: manufacturing hiring is concentrating in frontline leaders, system thinkers and core production staff, and talent decisions should match that mix rather than treating all roles as equal in impact.

HIGH-GROWTH LEADERSHIP & ENGINEERING

59% **Surge for first-line supervisors**

Job openings for production and operating worker supervisors lead the sector’s growth.

39% **Increase for industrial engineers**

Technical roles continue to see high demand as manufacturing processes evolve.

PRODUCTION & MAINTENANCE ESSENTIALS

30% **Growth in maintenance and repair**

General maintenance workers remain vital for sustaining consistent operational uptime.

29% **Rise for production workers**

All other production worker categories show steady and significant year-over-year opening increases.

High volume hiring remains hot

In the ICIMS Insights May Workforce report, we highlighted how entry-level and high-volume roles were drifting out of balance, with employer demand rising faster than candidate activity and hires only inching up. Openings in April 2026 were 18% above the March 2025 baseline, while application volume was down 9% after a brief January bump, and hires were up just 3%.

Within that broader picture, the hot jobs in frontline and high-volume hiring say a lot about where the real pressure sits. Openings for Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers and Weighers are up 51%, All Other Production Workers are up 48% and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers are up 41%. That mix concentrates demand in roles that keep goods moving and quality intact.

The market data shows an emphasis on securing the specific frontline roles that carry impact on output, reliability and customer experience, at a time when fewer candidates are stepping forward and every qualified applicant matters more.

51%

Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers and Weighers

48%

Production Workers

41%

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

Danny Rojas joins the ICIMS Insights team

We are welcoming a familiar face to our Insights team. **Danny Rojas** joins us after serving as Head of Talent Acquisition at The Container Store, and many in our community already know him from his time as an ICIMS customer.

Danny brings years of experience leading recruiting teams inside large enterprise organizations. He has seen firsthand where hiring strategies break down and where they deliver real results. He will focus on connecting those real-world practices to the work happening across our product and research efforts.

His perspective strengthens our commitment to reinvesting in the industry through data, insights, and practical knowledge. Danny will help translate what is happening in the market into clear, actionable thinking that ties back to measurable business outcomes.

"I've spent most of my career sitting in the same tension TA leaders are feeling right now. More tools, more data, more pressure, and at the same time a real expectation that hiring still feels clear, human, and tied to the business.

That's the work I'm stepping into at my day job at ICIMS. **I want to bring the practitioner voice closer to conversations around AI, recruiter workflow, candidate experience, and how teams and leaders turn market signals into better hiring decisions."**

DANNY ROJAS
Senior Principal,
Product & Market Insights,
ICIMS

FROM INSIGHTS TO IMPACT

Tailored takeaways

Whether you lead people, run operations or shape strategy, you can use these insights to align teams, reduce friction and move faster on your goals.

FOR THE Talent Leaders

Use prioritization to manage volume. As openings climb and applications thin, now is the time to sit with business partners and rank the roles that move the needle most.

That clarity lets talent leaders re-shape team capacity so recruiters spend their best hours on the few critical roles that must be filled, not the full list that landed in the queue.

FOR THE CHROs

Use alignment to reduce execution drag. The gap between demand and hiring is not just a staffing issue, it is a leadership one.

Partner with business heads to agree which roles are truly essential, then back your talent team with simple levers like referrals, internal mobility and past candidate outreach so they are not relying on external applications alone to hit targets.

FOR THE CXOs

Use talent constraints as a real input to strategy. Treat the gap between openings and hires as an operating limit, not background noise.

Work with your CHRO to sequence growth bets around the roles that are hardest to fill and make visible commitments to faster decisions, clearer role definitions and support for referral and internal move efforts so critical positions do not stall in process.

Want more great insights?

ICIMS State of Frontline Hiring Report

Frontline roles are the backbone of our workforce, but hiring for them continues to be challenging. Based on fresh data from over 2,000 frontline workers and hiring managers across healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing and retail, our **State of Frontline Hiring Report** uncovers why companies are struggling to fill roles.

ICIMS State of the CHRO Report

The role of HR has never been more strategic. Learn how 1,000 CHROs and chief people officers are navigating the shift and how 500 CIOs see HR navigating TA tech in the **ICIMS State of the CHRO Report**.

The Definitive Guide to AI Adoption in Talent Acquisition

69% of companies are using AI to hire. Only 18% use it throughout the recruiting process. Find out where your team stands. Get the full **Definitive Guide to AI Adoption in Talent Acquisition.**

About ICIMS

ICIMS is the talent acquisition platform that unites the strengths of enterprise software with the transformative power of AI.

Workforce data is vital to driving business forward.

ICIMS Insights provides data that is:

- Current
- Cross-industry
- Dual-focused on employer and job seeker intentions and activity

Data derived from:

3.1M+ global platform users

691M+ candidate profiles

~243M applications

5M+ hires

Visit icims.com to learn more.

Data Breakthrough Awards:
2026 Overall Data Science Solution of the Year