

## **Specialized skills drive higher compensation: 54% of managers are most willing to increase salaries for candidates with specialized skills or certifications**

- Robert Half releases 2026 Salary Guide highlighting key compensation trends amid a complex job market
- The guide reveals skills commanding salary premiums, evolving pay expectations, and the importance of emerging perks and benefits

TORONTO, Sept. 29, 2025 /CNW/ - Global talent solutions and consulting firm Robert Half has released the [2026 Canada Salary Guide](#), providing key insights into today's hiring and compensation landscape. As one of the original resources on compensation, the Robert Half Salary Guide examines current trends, benefits and perks, and projected starting salaries for hundreds of roles across six professional fields nationwide.

The company's latest report finds that many employers are offering higher salaries to candidates with specialized skills while most job seekers—despite a competitive market—are confident negotiating total compensation packages.

### **Specialized skills drive salary premium**

While overall salary growth has moderated, 83 per cent of hiring managers agree with the view that professionals with specialized skills are paid more than peers without them in the same role. 54 per cent say they are most willing to increase salaries for candidates with specialized skills or certifications during negotiations, above other factors including seniority, if the role supports a critical business need, and scarcity of qualified talent. According to the guide, roles in the following areas are projected to experience above-average salary gains in 2026:

- Payroll management (4.1%)
- Marketing analytics, digital marketing, and marketing automation (4.1%)
- Financial reporting (4.0%)
- Corporate tax (3.6%)
- AI, machine learning, and data science (3.3%)
- Law clerk management (3.0%)
- Customer support (2.9%)
- Compliance (2.6%)
- Cybersecurity (2.6%)
- Compensation and benefits (2.5%)

Meanwhile, 80 per cent of professionals say they feel confident negotiating salary offers, though many face hurdles such as understanding what is negotiable (36%), justifying their pay requests (33%) and determining their market value (32%).

"In today's job market, specialized skills are key differentiators, both for businesses seeking the talent they need to drive critical priorities, and for professionals to command salary premiums," said Koula Vasilopoulos, Senior Managing Director, Robert Half, Canada. "Organizations need to invest in the expertise that drives business forward, and understanding market value for top talent is a crucial first step. Workers equally need to know what their competition is bringing to the table so they can have informed and effective negotiations around salary and total compensation."

### **Total compensation takes centre stage**

With 71 per cent of employers concerned about meeting candidates' salary expectations, competitive perks, benefits, and other rewards are becoming increasingly important. The research shows that nearly half (46%) of hiring managers predict that adding new benefits and perks will be an effective recruiting strategy in 2026, while workers share which offerings would prompt them to switch employers—assuming base pay remained the same:

- Work-life balance (e.g., hybrid work): 52%
- Financial benefits (e.g., bonuses): 51%
- Retirement benefits: 43%
- Health and wellness programs: 39%

Nearly 7 in 10 job seekers say hybrid work is their preferred arrangement, and while most companies offer some type of hybrid option, the level of flexibility often depends on the employee's role and level of seniority. Our research shows 53 per cent of employers offer hybrid options to those in leadership roles and on a case-by-case basis, while 33 per cent offer them to all regular employees.

Other emerging offerings helping organizations differentiate include benefits such as extended health insurance, RRSP planning or pensions, signing bonuses and stock options, and perks including wellness programs, childcare assistance, and paid paternity leave.

*To access the full guide and explore salary trends by profession and location, visit <https://www.roberthalf.com/ca/en/insights/salary-guide>.*

### **About the 2026 Canada Salary Guide From Robert Half**

The 2026 Canada Salary Guide From Robert Half features salary benchmarks based on real compensation data and insights from Robert Half talent solutions professionals, as well as results from surveys developed by Robert Half and conducted by an independent research firm in April 2025. The surveys contain responses from more than 1,500 hiring managers and more than 1,500 professionals across Canada.

### **About Robert Half**

Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialized talent solutions firm that connects opportunities at great companies with highly skilled job seekers. Offering contract and permanent placement solutions in the fields of finance and accounting, technology, marketing and creative, legal, and administrative and customer support, Robert Half has more than 300 locations worldwide. Robert Half is the parent company of Protiviti®, a global consulting firm that provides internal audit, risk, business and technology consulting solutions. Robert Half, including Protiviti, has been named to the *Fortune*® Most Admired Companies™. Explore our comprehensive solutions, research and insights at [RobertHalf.ca](https://www.roberthalf.com).

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