Upwork November Monthly Hiring Report: Demand Rose for Quality Assurance Testers, Interpreters, and Creatives

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Companies turn to independent professionals to power digital operations with human touch, but skill gaps loom as a top challenge for 39% of businesses heading into 2026[1]

PALO ALTO, Calif., Dec. 04, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Upwork Inc. (Nasdaq: UPWK), the world's human and AI-powered work marketplace, today released its Monthly Hiring Report for November, finding that amid the race to scale AI systems, demand is rising for human-centered skills to reinforce work quality, uplevel communication and creativity, and power digital workflows. The report draws from more than 1 million job posts in the U.S. on the Upwork Marketplace annually and a monthly business pulse survey from the Upwork Research Institute. It offers a real-time view of how businesses are hiring in the $1.3 trillion contingent digital knowledge work market.[2]

"Businesses need talent who can apply creativity and human touch to everything they do," said Anthony Kappus, chief operating officer at Upwork. "Increased demand for interpreters, quality assurance testing, and creative skills highlight that companies are adopting AI rapidly but aren't confident the resulting code is ready to ship or the marketing copy is ready to inspire customers."

Top Hiring Insights: November 2025

Quality assurance testing rose 19% month-over-month as businesses add human capacity to increase confidence in adopting and scaling digital and AI systems.[3]
As businesses adopt and scale AI, they're discovering operational gaps that require more human expertise, not less. Every wave of automation builds demand for people who train, validate, and reinforce these systems.

- Data from the Upwork Marketplace:
  - **QA testing** grew 19%.[3]
  - **AI & machine learning** (AI data annotation & labeling, deep learning, generative AI modeling, etc.) grew 16%.[3]
  - **AI & apps integration** grew 7%.[3]
- 85% of businesses say digital fluency and AI literacy skills are becoming more important in their organization.[1]

Demand for communication and creative skills increased, led by a 48% rise in language tutoring and interpretation.[3]
Businesses are doubling down on applying the human touch to projects that depend on communication and creativity to deliver context and originality in work outputs.

- Data from the Upwork Marketplace:
  - **Language tutoring & interpretation** grew 48%.[3]
  - **Audio & music production** grew 20%.[3]
  - **Photography** grew 14%.[3]
- 38% of businesses say they are seeking strategic and creative thinking and 36% say they are seeking communication and interpersonal skills in independent talent.[1]

Hiring across marketing and e-commerce continued to expand as businesses enter peak holiday season.[3]
Building on significant growth in October, companies continue to strengthen marketing and brand strategies for the holiday season with steady demand for talent to maintain e-commerce infrastructure, drive sales, and support marketing.

- Data from the Upwork Marketplace:
  - **E-commerce development** grew 5%.[3]
  - **Lead generation & telemarketing** grew 5%.[3]
  - **Marketing, PR & brand strategy** grew 2%.[3]
- 40% of businesses plan to hire independent digital marketing professionals in the next three months.[1]

Top 10 Most In-Demand AI-Enabled Skills in November 2025[4]**:**

1. Graphic design
2. Python
3. Video editing
4. AI-generated video

5. ChatGPT
6. JavaScript
7. Adobe Photoshop
8. Adobe Illustrator
9. Video production (new)
10. Machine learning

“This month’s top AI-enabled skills show that more AI work is now part of a full workflow, rather than single, discrete tasks,” said Dr. Teng Liu, economist for the Upwork Research Institute. “Python and machine learning sit right alongside skills applied to video production and design tools. Teams need flexible talent who can conceptualize, build, and run these systems and workflows end-to-end.”

The Upwork Monthly Hiring Report is released monthly to provide timely workforce insights. For more insights from the world’s human and AI-powered work marketplace, visit upwork.com/research.

About The Upwork Monthly Hiring Report
The Upwork Monthly Hiring Report is designed to provide an early signal of broader shifts in how business leaders are hiring in real-time and aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of hiring trends in the U.S. labor market with a focus on the independent talent economy. The report draws from more than 1 million job posts in the U.S. on the Upwork Marketplace annually and a monthly business pulse survey from the Upwork Research Institute. It offers a real-time view of how businesses are hiring in the $1.3 trillion contingent digital knowledge work market.[2]

Methodology and Sources

[1] November Business Pulse Survey from the Upwork Research Institute.

[2] Estimated 2028 market size from Upwork Market Study, a commissioned third-party study that estimates the size of the flexible digital knowledge work market based on data from, among other sources, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, World Bank, and International Labour Organization (October 2025).

[3] Upwork Marketplace data reflecting month-over-month changes based on new contract activity in the U.S. from November 1-24, 2025 compared to October 1-24, 2025.

[4]Upwork Marketplace data reflecting top freelance skills hired for based on new contract activity in the U.S. from November 1-24, 2025.

About Upwork Inc.
Upwork Inc.’s (Nasdaq: UPWK) family of companies connects businesses with global, AI-enabled talent across every contingent work type including freelance, fractional, and payrolled. This portfolio includes the Upwork Marketplace, which connects businesses with on-demand access to highly skilled talent across the globe, and Lifted, which provides a purpose-built solution for enterprise organizations to source, contract, manage, and pay talent across the full spectrum of contingent work. From Fortune 100 enterprises to entrepreneurs, businesses rely on Upwork Inc. to find and hire expert talent, leverage AI-powered work solutions, and drive business transformation. With access to professionals spanning more than 10,000 skills across AI & machine learning, software development, sales & marketing, customer support, finance & accounting, and more, the Upwork family of companies enables businesses of all sizes to scale, innovate, and transform their workforces for the age of AI and beyond.

Since its founding, Upwork Inc. has facilitated more than $30 billion in total transactions and services as it fulfills its purpose to create opportunity in every era of work. Learn more about the Upwork Marketplace at upwork.com and follow on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X; learn more about Lifted at go-lifted.com and follow on LinkedIn.

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