

The Global Talent Playbook: Oyster Research Shows How Tech Leaders Are Accessing Specialized Skills On-Demand

46% contractor surge and \$137M to emerging markets signal shift from traditional employment to expertise-driven workforce models

Remote-First Company/SAN FRANCISCO—November XX, 2025—As technology leaders gather at Web Summit, research from [Oyster®](#), the global employment solution to employ, pay, and care for distributed teams, reveals a global shift in how companies build and scale teams.

Combined insights from Oyster's 2025 [Global Hiring Report](#) and [Impact Report](#) show businesses are moving beyond traditional employment models toward flexible, expertise-driven workforce strategies—transforming hiring from local to limitless.

The Rise of the Expertise Economy

The data signals what Oyster calls an "Expertise Economy," where companies increasingly access specialized talent on-demand rather than building permanent, location-bound teams. Key findings include:

- **Contractor engagements surged 46% year-over-year**, while permanent hires declined 2%, signaling a shift toward flexible, scalable workforce models.
- **Consulting arrangements grew 10x**, reflecting demand for fractional, project-based expertise.
- **Technology roles dominate** at 35% of global hires, particularly in Asia and South America.
- **84% of companies now operate hybrid models**, cementing flexible work as the new standard.

Global Talent: From Emerging Markets to Mainstream Strategy

Oyster's platform facilitates hiring across 110+ countries, with emerging markets representing a growing share of global talent acquisition. As a B Corp certified, mission-driven company, Oyster has proudly remitted \$137 million in payments to emerging markets in 2025—a 28% increase year-over-year. Data also shows:

- **47% of new hires** now come from emerging markets including the Philippines, India, Brazil, Egypt, and South Africa.
 - **Fastest-Growing Hiring Destinations:**
 - Mexico (+136%)
 - Peru (+89%)
 - Switzerland (+88%)
 - Colombia (+68%)
 - Serbia (+43%)

- **Confidence multiplier effect:** After their first international hire, companies increased emerging market hiring from 37% to 48%.
- **Improved equity:** Women's median salaries grew 17% over three years versus 13% for men, with growing female representation in technical roles.
- **Sustainable scaling:** Remote-first models show 80% lower per-employee carbon emissions than industry averages.

What This Means for Tech Companies

For Web Summit attendees building global teams, the data reveals strategic opportunities:

- **Rethink your talent architecture:** The binary choice between "employee" and "contractor" is obsolete. Leading companies now design workforce composition by function—permanent engineering cores in some regions, contractor specialists for emerging tech, consulting expertise for transformation projects.
- **Geographic arbitrage is over; expertise is in:** Companies initially attracted to emerging markets for cost savings are staying for specialized skills. The Philippines leads in tech talent (9% of all hires), while Mexico's 136% growth reflects expertise in nearshore development and Latin American market knowledge.
- **Master the engagement model mix by market:** In developed economies, 86% of team members are full-time employees with 14% contractors. In emerging markets, that ratio shifts dramatically: 53% full-time, 47% contractors. Successful companies adapt their approach based on local preferences and economic structures rather than applying one model everywhere.

"What's fascinating is watching companies evolve from cautious first movers to confident global employers," said Erin Goodey, Director of People Services at Oyster. "That jump from 37% to 48% emerging market hiring after the initial hire isn't just a statistic—it represents a fundamental mindset shift. Companies realize that the perceived barriers to global hiring often exceed the actual challenges, and the talent quality and engagement they find in markets like Mexico, Peru, and the Philippines quickly makes global hiring a core strategy rather than an experiment."

About Oyster

Oyster is a B Corp-certified global employment platform that empowers companies to hire, pay, and care for their global teams. It enables growing companies to give valued international team members the experience they deserve, without the usual headaches or expense. Oyster enables people-centric hiring anywhere in the world with reliable, compliant contracts, payroll, and great local benefits and perks. Founded in January 2020 by Tony Jamous, Oyster is itself a fully distributed company with a diverse, global team. For more information visit <https://oysterhr.com>.

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