

DATA & AI HIRING FOR 2026

AI & DATA TALENT SHORTAGE & UNFILLED ROLES

AI & Data talent gap is critical:

518K

1.6 M

0 500000 1000000 1500000 2000000

- **1.6M** open roles compared to a **518K** qualified candidate supply
- Expected to widen by **700,000** unfilled roles by **2027**.



AI engineering job openings grew **+25% YoY in 2025**



Which Specialized roles are hardest to fill for companies in 2026:

AI Governance / Ethics: 78%

AI Data Scientists: 74%

AI Compliance: 72%

ML / Data Engineers: 71%

0 20 40 60 80

Where Demand Remains Strong
Data Science & AI

Companies are hiring specialists in:

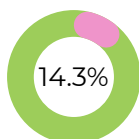
- Product Data
- ML engineering
- GenAI
- Strategy / Evaluation
- MLOps

New specialization tracks

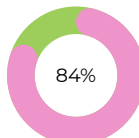
- Product Data Scientist
- GenAI Engineer
- Applied Data Scientist



DATA SCIENCE & ANALYTICS TALENT



New Tech roles in 2025 in data science climbed from **168K** to **192K**, a **+14.3%** increase.



84% of companies report skills shortages, with AI/ML roles taking an average **89** days to fill.

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DATA ANALYTICS, AI & CLOUD STAFFING EXPERTS
SALARY SNAPSHOT 2026

Role	Salary Range	Total Compensation Range
ML Engineer	\$186,000 – \$235,000	\$220,000–\$346,000
AI/ML Engineer	\$181,000 – \$271,000	\$280,000–\$395,000
ML Researcher	\$188,000–\$250,000+	Amazon/Google: \$500K+ Anthropic/Bain: \$800K+
Vice President Data Engineering	\$237,000 – \$325,000	\$298,000– \$395,000
Senior Director Data Engineering	\$169,000 – \$289,000	\$210,000–\$365,000
Vice President Data Science	\$286,000–\$369,000	\$400,000–\$650,000
Senior Director Data Science	\$179,000– \$296,000	\$213,000–\$359,000
Senior AI Architect	\$179,000– \$292,000	\$203,000–\$350,000
AI Architect	\$169,000–\$254,000	\$178,000 – \$297,000



 How Long Does A Candidate Review A Job Posting?

Job descriptions get 10–30 seconds of attention.

Candidates **scan**, they don't read every bullet. If your JD doesn't highlight what matters most, you're losing top talent before they even apply.

 What tech candidates care about most for tech roles in 2026:

- ✓ Continuous learning & skill growth ✓ Competitive total rewards
- ✓ Challenging, meaningful projects ✓ Remote/hybrid flexibility
- ✓ Supportive leadership & culture ✓ Exposure to bleeding edge technology

 Speed is your competitive edge.

Top candidates are off the market in **10–12 days**.

If your approval-to-offer timeline is longer, you risk losing them to faster-moving companies.

Curious how you can hire Data & AI Talent in less than 12 days?



*Reach out to discuss our Partnership Approach
to identifying top passive candidates in
the Data and AI market.*

