

2022-2023

TECH SECTOR CAREER INTENTIONS & RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

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# What tech sector professionals think about their careers

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## Introduction

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This is the eighth year that Be-IT has commissioned research into IT candidates' job-hunting intentions and the channels they use to find new jobs, as part of our wider IT and digital jobs salary survey carried out throughout November and December 2022.

The IT job market has been booming throughout 2022, although we have noticed a dip in November (that seems to coincide with the World Cup!).

Last year, we introduced a few new questions to look at a range of different factors – career opportunity, non-cash benefits and others, and the part they play in candidates' decisions. With eight years' worth of data, we're able to highlight and analyse patterns and trends in the IT recruitment market and make qualitative assessments as to the reasons behind them. Many of these trends had been driven by the pandemic, but that is largely behind us now, although with the expectation that the worsening economic outlook will continue into 2023, there is no reason to be complacent. Consequently, this key part of our annual salary survey research makes fascinating (indeed essential) reading for anyone in IT/digital who is considering moving jobs - and for employers looking to recruit in 2023.

We have learnt over the years that our annual career planning survey throws up as many questions as it answers. Nonetheless, the fact that we are now building up a longer-term set of data, which is generally consistent from year to year, gives us confidence in the general tone and direction of our analysis and the confidence employers and candidates alike derive from this report.

As always, our thanks go to [thePotentMix](#), who carried out the salary survey and career planning questionnaire, using Be-IT's extensive candidate database of over 40,000 individuals, our Be-IT Expert's diverse LinkedIn contacts, a SurveyMonkey and a complementary social media campaign.

We know that the survey results are the most popular page on our [website](#) (other than the huge range of jobs) every year. If you have any questions or would like to discuss how the results and analysis here affect you and/or your business, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your regular Be-IT contact or, if you prefer, directly with [me](#).

**Nikola Kelly**

Managing Director, Be-IT Resourcing & Be-IT Projects

# Executive Summary

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## Moving job in the last 12 months

50% of respondents had moved jobs in 2022 – up from 45% last year. Of these, 7% had moved jobs more than once – the same as last year.

The eight-year average for people moving jobs one or more times is 49%.

The reasons for moving last year were:

- 34% made a sideways move to a different company, but at the same level – up from 27% last year.
- 11% made an upwards move at the same company – up from 10% last year.
- 32% made an upwards move at a different company – the same as last year.
- 16% just wanted a change – down substantially from 27% last year.
- 6% made a downward move, for whatever reason – up from 4% last year.

## Move job in the next six months?

43% intend to move jobs in the first half of 2023 – a decline on last year's 46% and on the seven-year average of 49%.

33% say they do not intend to move in the next six months – a large increase from 24% last year and above the seven-year average of 27%.

23% are undecided – down from 30% last year and just below the seven-year average of 24%.

The reasons why people intend to move jobs in the next six months are:

- 20% expect to make a sideways move to a different company, but at the same level – the same as last year.
- 24% expect to make an upwards move at the same company – the same as last year.
- 35% expect to make an upwards move at a different company – the same as last year.
- 19% just wanted a change - slightly down on last year's 21%.
- 1% expect to make a downward move – the same as last year.

## Size/status of a potential employer

42% are not concerned about what size of company they work for.

20% prefer a multi-national employer.

18% prefer an SME (fewer than 250 employees).

13% prefer a large company (250+ employees).

Perhaps surprisingly, only 6% would prefer a start-up.

## WFH/remote working

In 2021/22, 76% of candidates said they would refuse to take a job that didn't allow them to at least partially work from home.

This has increased to 95% in 2022/23, with 50% of all respondents wanting to work full-time from home, 45% wanting two or three days working at home and only 5% happy to work full-time in the office.



## **What people look for in a new job**

Pay and the technical challenges of the work are ranked first by candidates as the most important elements they look for in a new role, a very long way ahead of (in order) other financial benefits (bonuses, incentives, etc.), pension and non-financial benefits (diversity/inclusion policies, wellbeing, social activities, etc.)

## **Recruitment channels and comms used in job hunting**

LinkedIn dominates, with 87% using it to find jobs. Recruitment agencies are next most popular, with 61%.

As in recent years, generalist job boards (53%) and then specialist job boards (51%) are the next most popular. No other channel scored over 50%.

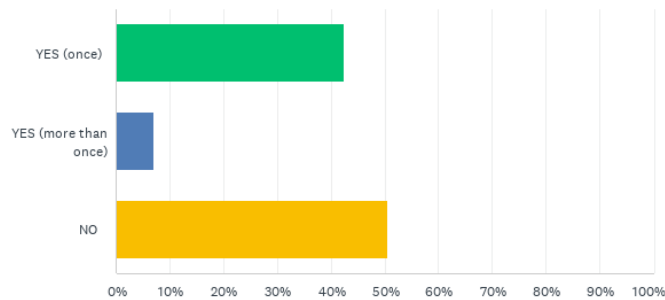
Networking was used by 38%. Direct approaches to an employer continued the downward trend of the last four years, with only 30% using them.

Social media channels are now at the lowest level (8%) they have been since we began our surveys in 2015.

## Summary & Analysis

### Q.1 Have you moved jobs in the last year?

Last year we noted that the responses to this question had reverted to the pre-pandemic pattern. This continued in 2022, with this year's responses being broadly similar to last year's, as shown below.



The turnaround between movers and non-movers in the last eight years is shown on Table 1 below:

Table 1

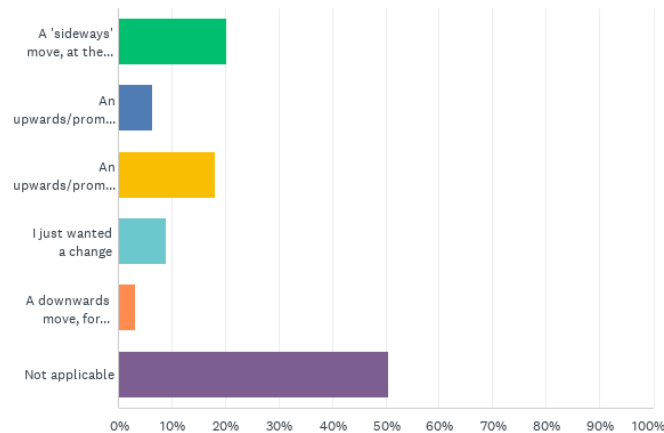
Year	% - Yes, once	% - Yes, more than once	% - No
2015	45	17	38
2016	32	6	62
2017	40	8	52
2018	45	7	48
2019	35	6	59
2020	50	6	44
2021	38	7	55
<b>2022</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>50</b>
Average	41	8	51

It is interesting (and reassuring!) that the percentage that say they have moved is, on average, half of the total. This broadly mirrors the numbers/percentage that says they intend to move in the year ahead (see Table 3 below). Also, apart from 2015 (which seems to be an outlier) the numbers moving more than once is very much the same year-on-year.



## Q.2 Reasons for moving last year?

As with the previous question, there is a lot of similarity in the responses year-on-year.




Respondents are given five principal reasons for moving jobs. These are shown in Table 2 below, together with all results from the first of our surveys to last year.

Table 2

Year	% Sideways move to a diff. company	% Upwards move at the same company	% Upwards move to a diff. company	% I just wanted a change	% Downwards move, for whatever reason
2015	33	12	19	31	5
2016	38	10	23	25	4
2017	21	21	31	25	2
2018	27	12	27	27	7
2019	36	18	21	21	4
2020	38	7	24	24	7
2021	27	10	32	27	4
<b>2022</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>
Ave.	32	13	26	25	5

As you can see, there is general consistency in each column in the table above, with relatively little movement about the mean for the last eight years. One thing that is worth noting (see Table 4 below) is that the number/percentage actually taking a downward move in the past year is always higher than the number/percentage who say they will do so in the next six months. We suspect this may be due to some unexpectedly being made redundant (although there were fewer comments – below – that mentioned redundancy this year) and because life's crises and events combine to force changes that are not planned.

There were a small number of additional comments to this question. As in 2020 and 2021, redundancy and especially the end of contracts all have had a major impact on individuals. However, for the first time



in the last few years, no one mentioned Covid, suggesting (hopefully) that we have put the pandemic and lockdowns behind us.

### **Comments on reasons for changing jobs in the last year**

- Contractor and I love building software - I am a product owner.
  - Civil Service.
  - Bandwidth-monitored.
  - 14k wage rise.
  - Bullying and poor behaviour in one company.
  - I want to do a full-time UX job.
  - I'm a contractor - new contract & sideways move.
  - From contractor to permanent.
  - Redundancy.
  - New contract.
  - Redundancy.
  - The old contract came to an end, after nearly 2 years.
  - I was moved to the UK so I resigned.
  - About to move within the next few weeks.
  - Asked to return to work from early retirement.
  - I'm a contractor.
  - Moved from contract work to permanent.
  - Contract end took a break to visit family abroad then started a new contract upon return.
  - Started an apprenticeship after leaving the sixth form.
-

### Q.3 Do you intend actively to look for a job in the next six months?

Unlike the two previous questions, there was a different pattern this year compared to last, with “No” overtaking “Undecided” and the percentage saying they actively intend to look for a job declining.

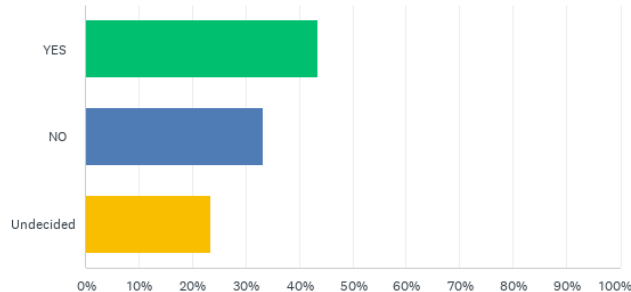


Table 3 below shows the longer-term trend. The totals may not always add up to 100 due to rounding.


Table 3:

Year	% Undecided	% No	% Yes
2016	18	29	53
2017	29	24	47
2018	24	33	43
2019	21	23	56
2020	20	26	54
2021	16	32	52
2022	30	24	46
<b>2023</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>43</b>
Average	23	28	49

We suspect that because the survey was carried out in the last two months of 2022 – against a slew of bad economic news and no obvious sign of any improvement – it may be that many potential candidates are watching and waiting to see how the (IT jobs) market moves in the first few months of the new year. They will also be influenced by the noise and news reporting about the economy as a whole, which, during periods of recession, can lead to employees sitting tight rather than risking ‘last in, first out’ redundancy at a new employer who, if the market continues to tighten, can get rid of people more easily before their probation period is finished.

This inference is further supported by the fact that in this year’s survey the percentage who say they will not move jobs next year is – at one-third – the (joint) highest in our records. Conversely, the percentage saying they will move is one of the lowest on record. This is, on the face of it, potentially good news for employers, but only if these people do, in fact, decide to maintain their position vis-à-vis a new job during 2023\*. Moreover, with some 23% undecided - a considerable reduction on last year – all this augurs well for staff retention, albeit not necessarily for those looking to add strength to their teams or replace talent that has moved to pastures new. On the other hand, it's potentially not good news for recruiters...





In more general terms, for employers, the 49% of candidates (effectively half of the total) who, on average, are looking to move in the first six months of every new year is one of the more important findings of our long-term research – especially as it is backed up by the results of Q. 1, where the long-term average of those who did move in the previous year was also 49%.

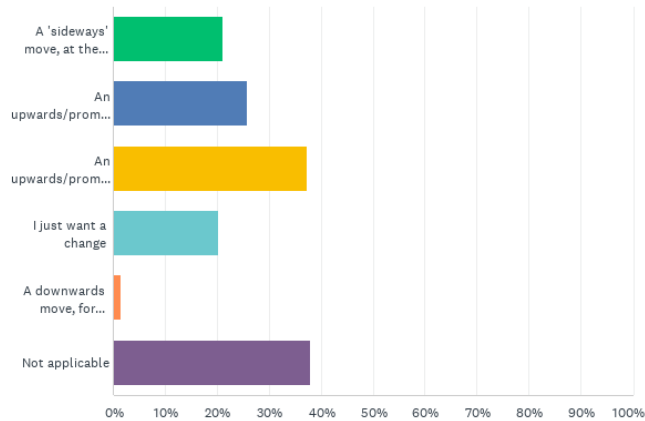
In stark terms, this means that employers can expect to lose potentially up to half of their employees in any calendar year, although in reality (at Tables 2 and 4 in this report show), a substantial number (potentially up to a quarter) actually accept a promotion to stay with their current employer. Even allowing for this, it's clear that employers need to focus strongly on retaining employees (something we have advocated strongly in previous surveys), especially in a tight job market where it can be very hard to replace a star performer's experience and skills with a similarly talented and experienced individual.

However, as we stress every year, those who are either undecided or not intending to move are not a homogeneous group but will change throughout the year as people become more or less inclined to seek a move. But if the figures from this year's survey are borne out as we move through 2023, with fewer people looking to change jobs, then employers (via their employer brand/reputation management), resources and recruiters will have to make doubly sure they remain in contact with both active and passive candidates, who will be more or less approachable at different times. Regular networking and content sharing will be even more important and will increase the chances that a recruiter/resourcer will be able to identify the optimum moment to approach a candidate with a suitable vacancy.

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## Q.4 Reasons for moving in the coming year?

The same five reasons are offered for those seeking to move in the year ahead as for those who moved last (and in every other) year.



The entire series, from the first of our surveys, is shown in Table 4 below. Again, totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 4:

Year	% Sideways move to a diff. company	% Upwards move at the same company	% Upwards move to a diff. company	% I just wanted a change	% Downwards move, for whatever reason
2017	34	13	31	21	1
2018	24	17	35	21	3
2019	24	21	30	23	2
2020	27	18	31	22	2
2021	23	20	34	22	1
2022	20	24	35	20	1
<b>2023</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>
Ave.	25	20	33	21	2

As you can see, the results are virtually identical (only differing due to rounding) from last year to this year. As always, a tiny minority are happy to move downwards (usually for personal reasons in our experience – although, as Table 2 shows, more end up moving downwards than expected), while most people seek to improve their position both financially and in terms of their job status, whether with their existing employer or a new one.

Interestingly, unlike the situation in recent years, we are seeing (Table 7 below) candidates becoming more focused on pay than on many of the intangible benefits (well-being, gym membership, etc.) that they demanded previously. Inflation is an issue here, but given that tech jobs are largely in the private sector, with no or little trade union representation, it is up to individuals to make their claims for enhanced

pay and conditions – and many are doing so, knowing there is frequently a premium employers will pay for their skills and experience.

**For employers**, seeking good news from Table 4 is difficult. On the one hand, the percentage who say they will seek a promotion at their existing company is higher than the series average while the percentage who want a sideways move to a new company is below the series average. Both these can be taken as welcome news for employers. However, on the other hand, the percentage seeking promotion with a new employer is above the series average. This could be taken to suggest that the better – seemingly more ambitious – people are more likely to move on, with those who are content to stay and/or move at a similar level perhaps being the ‘steady eddies’ which every company needs. That said, we must stress that this is conjecture, based on our experience, and further research would be needed to find out if this is, in fact, the case.

What we do know is that with IT recruitment buoyant throughout 2022, underpinned by surging inflation, candidates have been able to call the shots and, as noted above, tech firms have had to dig deep to finance new hires and to keep existing staff. Candidates know their worth has increased and, with talent shortages in many key tech areas, they have held most of the aces this year.

This may change in some other areas of the economy as interest rates rise and the economy sinks into what is predicted to be a longish recession, especially given the enormous numbers of economically inactive (reaching 20+% of the labour force in major UK cities, including [Glasgow](#)). Labour market statisticians think it is probable that the gloomy economic conditions will result in general unemployment rising in 2023. However, in IT we don't think this is so likely, because there is such a shortage of developers that the demand is likely to be unable to be met for some time to come. While a number of tech firms may make redundancies, CTOs and CEOs, well aware of the pivotal position technology plays at the heart of their businesses, are doing everything they can to retain their IT teams.

Against this backdrop, the ONS says that ‘economic inactivity’ is starting to fall, so this trend away from work might be beginning to reverse. That said, one thing we do think likely is that with the shortages of skills in key areas of IT, and given the visa system for immigration is still not functioning as it should and we can't produce tech talent overnight, companies will look to automate more in 2023 in order to reduce spend on back-office employees. This will, however, lead to more people looking for lower skilled work and an increased focus on re-training, including re-training into tech careers.

#### Comments under Question 4

- New contract.
  - End of the contract, more pay.
  - Not had a rate increase in 3 years.
  - Technology and company visions.
  - Less demanding role.
  - For a salary increase.
  - Being micro-managed and not able to use my experience to benefit the company
  - Or start my own business.
  - Contractor.
  - Contract end.
  - After my 6 months contract ends, I will return to retirement.
  - Contract expires.
-

## Comparing this year with last year

As we did last year, we are again looking to see if there is any consistency in candidates' decision-making. We can do this by comparing the reasons people gave for actually moving in the last 12 months with those they give for potentially moving in the next six months.

Reason	2022	2023
A 'sideways' move, to work for a different company	34%	20%
An upwards/promotion move at the same company	11%	24%
An upwards/promotion move at a different company	32%	35%
I just want a change	16%	19%
A downwards move, for whatever reason	6%	1%

## What can we read into these statistics?

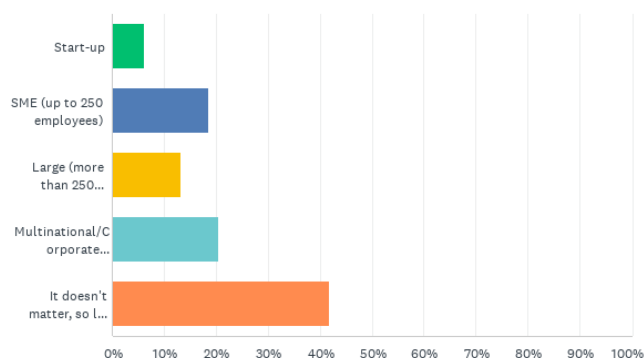
This generally replicates what we found in last year's report. For example, the number who say they will take a downward move is always fewer than those who had actually done so the previous year (Table 2 above). Similarly, the numbers who actually took a sideways move to a new company are far higher than those who say they intend to do this in 2023. On the other side of the recruitment ledger, and probably for similar reasons, the percentage saying they want an upward move, whether at their own or another company, is also lower in the preceding year when compared to the numbers who wish it to happen in the forthcoming year.

This is almost certainly human nature coming face to face with economic reality. Last year, this was particularly the case in the contracting market, faced as it was with increasing issues around IR35 after its introduction to the private sector in April 2021. In the intervening period, we've seen the government change its mind twice about IR35, first announcing it would be withdrawn in April 2023 and then, less than a month later, changing its mind (and their prime minister). This has hardly engendered confidence in many of the key sectors of the economy, not just IT but also other areas like construction and finance.

**For candidates**, we suggest all this means that they really do need to take stock of their position when thinking about a move. Even if not actively looking at present, to ensure a successful career move in the future candidates should be looking six months to a year (or more) ahead. For many, their current employer is just the ticket, but for others, for a variety of reasons, it is worth speaking to a (Be-IT) recruitment specialist to ensure that their intentions are sound and all their expectations can be met. As shown in Table 5, the percentages who expect one outcome in the year ahead are different from those who experienced the same outcome the year before, which in turn explains why regular communication with a recruiter is so important. Relationships take time: candidates should not think that engaging with a recruiter means you will be directly progressed to current live roles unless you actively want to. In our view, candidates should take advantage of the expertise that recruiters offer by asking them what is happening in the market, and what their (the candidate's) skillset could demand in current – and future – work environments. All good recruiters will be happy to keep candidates up-to-date with market information, so that in the future, when they (the candidates) are ready to make a move, everything can proceed swiftly and professionally to achieve the desired result.

## Q.5 What size of company would be your ideal employer?

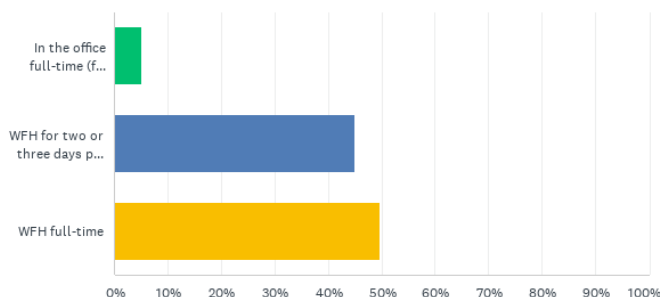
The next question was new to our survey this year. We had no preconceived idea as to what answers we would get to this question. In the event, it is clear that the majority (42%) are simply not bothered, although what is also interesting is that the smallest response (6%) was from those who would ideally work at a start-up. 20% preferred a multi-national, 18% an SME (fewer than 250 employees) and 13% a large (250+ employees).



## Q.6 How much flexibility do you want in your working week?

This question followed on from last year's questions about WFH, although this year we asked it in a slightly different manner, simply asking candidates how much flexibility they want in their working week.

Half of our respondents actually want to work full-time from home, albeit 45% also said they wanted two or three days at home. Unsurprisingly, only 5% were happy to work full-time in the office.



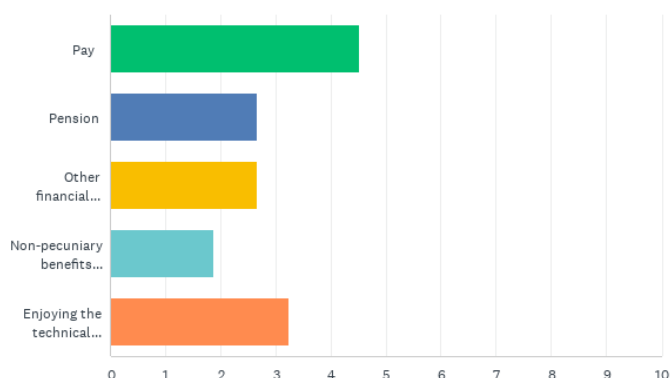
Last year, we found that 76% said they wanted to work from home, which was in line with other surveys at that time, and (again from last year's survey) the most popular form of WFH was totally remote working rather than partial (two or three days) flexible working. We said then that this has major implications for IT employers and recruiters in the year ahead and this year's findings - in effect, telling us 95% now want to work either partly or entirely from home - strongly reinforce this conclusion.

The next question was broadly similar to one we asked last year, namely, seeking candidates' views on what they look for in their next job, although we simplified the range of criteria compared to our 2021 survey.

## Q.7 Please list these key attributes of a new job in order of importance.

The key attributes we asked respondents to rank in order were:

- Pay
- Pension
- Other financial benefits (overtime, bonus, incentives, car, travel, gym membership, etc.)
- Non-pecuniary benefits (wellness, DEI policies, social activities, etc.)
- Enjoying the technical challenges of the work involved.




Respondents were asked to rank the various attributes in order of importance to them. The bar chart above shows the relative scores of all the attributes in total and Table 7 shows the varying results at each level of that ranking.

Table 7:

Attribute	1	2	3	4	5	Score
Pay	70.30%	19.31%	5.45%	2.48%	2.48%	<b>4.52</b>
Enjoying the technical challenges of the work involved	21.18%	25.12%	22.17%	19.70%	11.82%	<b>3.24</b>
Other financial benefits (overtime, bonus, incentives, car, travel, gym membership, etc.)	2.00%	21.50%	32.00%	30.50%	14.00%	<b>2.67</b>
Pension	2.03%	27.92%	28.43%	17.26%	24.37%	<b>2.66</b>
Non-pecuniary benefits (wellness, DEI policies, social activities, etc.)	3.54%	6.06%	12.12%	30.30%	47.98%	<b>1.87</b>

Even though we didn't use exactly the same list of criteria, last year pay was also the most important, with some 59% ranking it first. This year, some 70% ranked it first. Similarly, last year, the technical challenges of the work scored very highly, while here it's second. Interestingly, and perhaps contrary to the current zeitgeist, non-cash benefits, including social activities and DEI policies, scored poorly, both this year and last. As noted throughout this report, we believe this reflects the increasing importance of hard money – as opposed to other benefits – as candidates struggle to cope with rising inflation and the escalating cost of living.





The one thing that did slightly surprise us was the importance of a pension. This year, as last, it ranked in mid-table: this year, it's the second least important consideration for candidates. Is this a reflection of the comparative youthfulness of most IT people, who, being largely Gen Z and Millennials, are thinking more of their current situation (buying a house and/or possibly raising a family) rather than their long-term future? While it might be more sensible for these people to focus on the importance of a pension, especially as the state pension age will be very much higher than it is now by the time Gen Z actually reach it, the signal this sends to employers is that pay and the technical work involved are the two most important elements to sell to prospective candidates at the moment.

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## Q.8 what methods do you use when job-hunting?

This question has remained virtually the same since we began these surveys back in 2015. The options offered to respondents are as follows and they could tick all that applied:

- Job-boards (generalist – e.g. TotalJobs, S1 etc.).
- Job-boards (Specialist IT).
- Recruitment agency/Headhunter
- LinkedIn
- Direct approach to a company
- Networking amongst friends and colleagues
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
- Newspaper or other print advert
- Other (please specify)


Table 8 shows this year's results, followed by Table 9, which shows last year's. The fact that there is no change in the ranking of any channel shows a) the continuing dominance of LinkedIn, b) the relative conservatism of job-hunters (also shown by the lack of interest in chatbots in our two previous years' surveys), c) the efforts made by the relevant media channels to maintain their importance to their users, d) the declining importance of social media (other than LinkedIn) and finally, e) the importance of recruitment consultancies.

Table 8 (2022)

LinkedIn	87%
Recruitment agency/headhunter	61%
Job-boards (generalist - e.g. TotalJobs, S1, etc)	53%
Job-boards (specialist IT)	51%
Networking amongst friends and colleagues	38%
Direct approach to a company	30%
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	8%
Newspaper or other print advert	3%
Other (please specify)	2%

Table 9 (2021)

LinkedIn	87%
Recruitment agency/headhunter	76%
Job-boards (generalist - e.g. TotalJobs, S1, etc)	76%
Job-boards (specialist IT)	69%
Networking amongst friends and colleagues	52%
Direct approach to a company	37%
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	13%
Newspaper or other print advert	4%
Other (please specify)	3%



Yet again, **LinkedIn** stands out, as does the importance of job-boards in general and recruitment agencies in particular. It's intriguing that generalist **job-boards** score (slightly) better than specialist ones, especially as at Be-IT we find that neither has been particularly effective for our resourcers for quite a few years.

**Networking** continues to be popular, although less so than in previous years. Yet again, we note that this strengthens the argument for having an attractive *employee referral* scheme, whereby current staff can benefit financially from introducing talent into the organisation.

**Direct approaches to a company** continued to decline in importance, continuing a trend over the last four years. The percentage making a direct approach to a company fell from 55% in 2019 to only 47% in 2020, declined by a further 10% to only 37% last year and has now fallen to only 30%. This is, we believe, reflected in the continuing importance of recruiters like Be-IT, with candidates preferring the range and diversity of jobs they offer, rather than the narrow range of options at any one company.

As noted above, other **social media**, although rising slightly in importance from 2021 (from 10% in 2020 to 13% in 2021), have again declined, to only 8%. This is their lowest score since we began these surveys back in 2015.

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## Find out more

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For more information, please contact us at: [info@be-itresourcing.com](mailto:info@be-itresourcing.com) or call 0333 344 7085.

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