

**SUMMER
2026**



**While Everyone
Waits for September:
Why Summer Is
Now the Smartest
Time to Hire**

**VONQ
VIEW**

Executive Summary

HR teams have long planned around one assumption: summer is when hiring slows down. Market signals increasingly suggest the opposite.

Across labour market trends, evolving candidate behaviour, and campaign insights from VONQ's global programmatic recruitment platform, a clear shift is emerging: employers are bringing hiring activity forward. Candidates are engaging earlier and more intentionally. The result is real momentum - ahead of the September surge, not because of it.

The conditions this creates are measurable: reduced competition for candidate attention, stronger candidate intent, and more favourable recruitment economics. For teams operating with tighter budgets and leaner resources, this is a window worth taking seriously.

Capturing it, though, requires more than maintaining recruitment activity. It requires the ability to respond continuously to changing candidate behaviour, shifting channel performance, and fluctuating competition levels. This is where programmatic recruitment advertising becomes particularly relevant. Through automation, real-time optimisation, and performance-based investment, organisations can adapt dynamically to market conditions and turn a quiet season into a strategic advantage.

In this **Summer edition** of The VONQ View, we explore why summer is becoming a competitive lever in recruitment, and how programmatic advertising enables organisations to capture it.



What our platform data is telling us

As a provider of programmatic recruitment technology managing high-volume campaigns across global hiring markets, VONQ has a unique view into seasonal recruitment behaviour through aggregated campaign performance and platform insights across industries, channels, and candidate journeys. Three clear developments are emerging in summer hiring behaviour:

01 Summer hiring activity is increasing

02 Candidate behaviour is becoming increasingly mobile-first

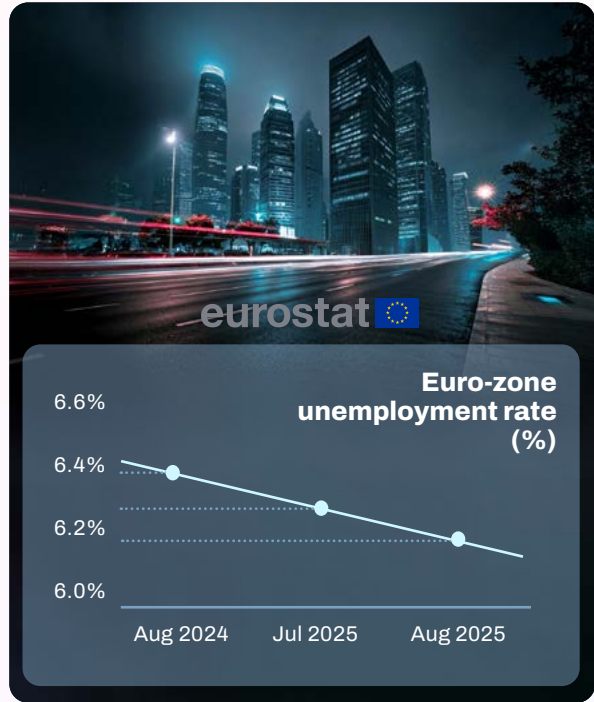
03 Performance-based recruitment strategies are delivering stronger efficiency during off-peak hiring periods

These shifts are reshaping how organisations should approach Q3 recruitment planning.

Summer is no longer a holding pattern

VONQ's performance data shows that employers are no longer treating summer as a pause. Key signals from our platform include:

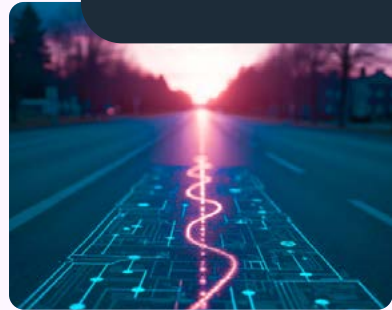
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Earlier timelines:
 Vacancies launched 4-6 weeks earlier compared to historic September-led hiring cycles (observed since 2023)
- 
Increased volume:
 8-12% increase in roles posted during June and July compared to previous year
- 
Shifted onboarding:
 Peak in final offer activity shifted to late August compared to pre-2023 hiring patterns



External labour market data underline this. According to Eurostat¹, euro area unemployment declined from 6.3% in July to 6.2% in August, compared with 6.4% during the same period the previous year - equivalent to approximately 170,000 additional people moving into employment during the summer period.

What was once a seasonal hiring curve is increasingly flattening. Instead of concentrated hiring peaks, employers and candidates are maintaining more continuous engagement throughout the year. **Several forces are driving this - both market and technology driven:**

Market drivers



Early-movers
 Candidates increasingly engage before the September hiring peak to secure opportunities earlier.

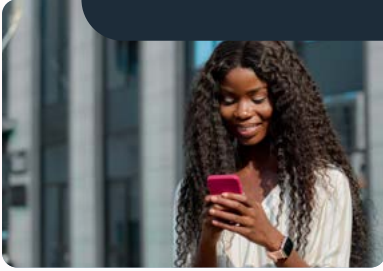


Avoiding the crowds
 Longer hiring cycles and growing applicant volumes encourage candidates to apply earlier.



Off-peak advantage
 Lower summer competition can shorten hiring cycles and improve candidate visibility.

Technology drivers



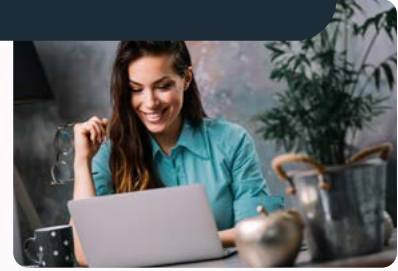
Always-on job search

Mobile usage and social platforms make job discovery continuous - regardless of season



One-click applications

Fast-apply and AI-supported application journeys reduce friction and accelerate decision-making.



Remote-friendly interviews

Virtual and AI video interview formats remove traditional scheduling barriers and increase flexibility.

The sectors that aren't waiting

Summer hiring activity is not evenly distributed across industries. VONQ's sector-level analysis shows that while some continue to follow traditional seasonal cycles, others maintain - or accelerate - recruitment activity during Q3 in response to operational demand, workforce planning cycles, and changing market conditions.

Education & Healthcare:

Education peaks in June/July for academic year planning. Healthcare remains at 100% capacity to manage holiday staffing gaps.

Construction & Engineering:

Project-driven demand and seasonal operating conditions contribute to an estimated 15% increase in hiring activity.

Logistics & Retail:

Recruitment begins in late July/August to prepare for the "Golden Quarter" (Black Friday/Christmas) ramp-up.

More broadly, hiring reports for the technology sector in 2025 show that specialised roles in AI, Data Science, and Cyber-security did not follow seasonal lulls. Hiring for these niche roles remained competitive throughout the summer window.



Candidates have moved to mobile. Has your recruitment?

Studies consistently show that job-seeking activity increasingly migrates to mobile during the summer months - candidates checking LinkedIn and job boards from the beach, the airport, or the park.

In 2026, an emerging behaviour is amplifying this further. „Micro-applying“, using one-click mobile profiles - combined with save-for-later actions is bridging the gap between passive browsing and active conversion.

Candidates who would previously have scrolled past a role are now bookmarking, shortlisting, and completing applications in fragmented moments throughout their day.

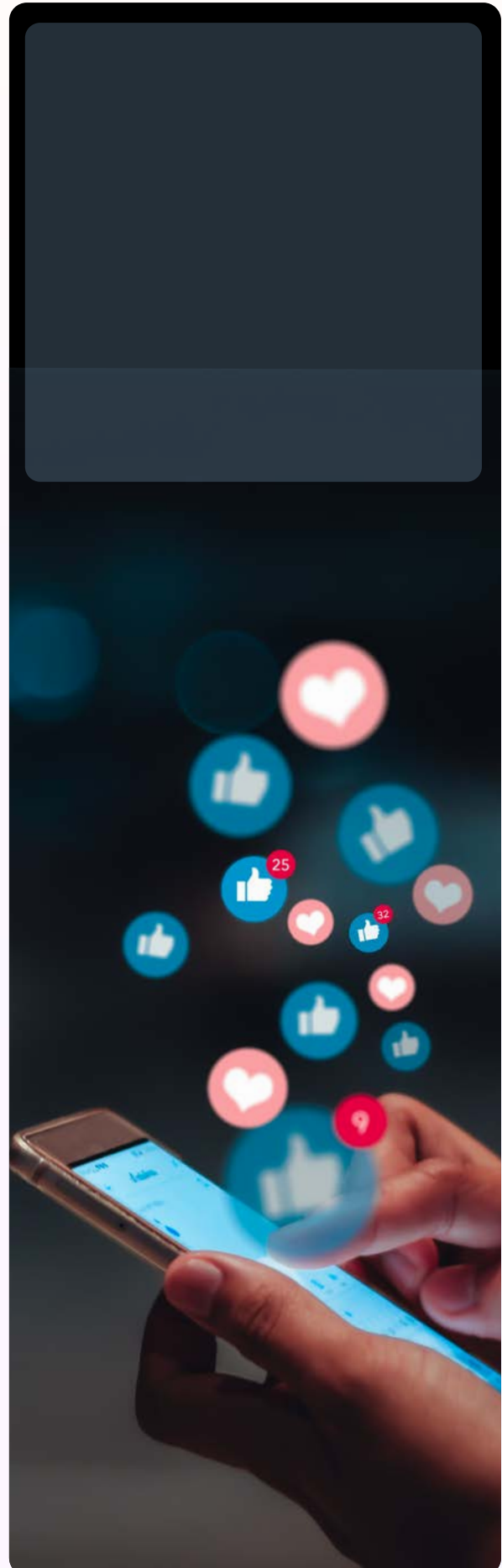
The friction has dropped. The question is whether employer recruitment infrastructure is keeping pace.

Good market conditions don't execute themselves

Candidate engagement remains high during the summer. Mobile behaviour increases. Advertising competition softens. The conditions are genuinely favourable.

At the same time, recruitment teams often operate with reduced capacity, tighter budgets, and limited time for manual optimisation. Traditional recruitment approaches are not always designed to respond effectively to this combination.

Fixed job postings distribute spend upfront, remain locked into predefined channels, and rely heavily on manual intervention at a time when candidate behaviour and market conditions continue to shift.



Programmatic advertising operates differently.

Rather than distributing recruitment budgets across fixed channels and static job postings, programmatic uses automation, performance data, and real-time decision-making to continuously optimise where, when, and how recruitment media investment is deployed.

By continuously analysing channel performance, candidate engagement, device behaviour, and conversion signals, programmatic technology dynamically reallocates investment toward the audiences and channels delivering the strongest results in real time.

SUMMER HIRING CHALLENGE	Programmatic capability	Strategic outcome
Pressure to maximise budget efficiency	Performance-based investment models prioritise spend toward channels and actions delivering measurable results	Budget integrity - ensures Q3 budgets are focused on high-intent candidate actions and measurable ROI
Need for faster optimisation and market responsiveness	Data-driven rules and real-time performance insights continuously optimise channel mix and budget allocation	Agility in changing market conditions - campaigns adapt dynamically to shifting candidate behaviour and market signals
Limited team capacity and reduced bandwidth	Automated workflows integrated from ATS job creation through campaign activation reduce manual effort and maintain execution speed	Scale without additional headcount - enables lean summer teams to sustain recruitment momentum with minimal manual effort



How VONQ turns summer signals into hiring results

To translate favourable summer market conditions into measurable hiring outcomes, organisations require recruitment strategies that can adapt continuously to changing candidate behaviour and channel performance.

VONQ's programmatic advertising platform is built for this. It transitions talent attraction from fixed, manual postings to dynamic, performance-based campaign management - integrated directly into an employer's Applicant Tracking System (ATS).

VONQ automates job distribution across leading pay-per-performance job boards, aggregators, and social channels, including Indeed, Joblift, Jooble, Facebook, and Instagram - enabling centralised campaign management from a single environment.



Optimizing spend in real time

By shifting to flexible Cost-Per-Click and Cost-Per-Applicant budget models, the technology automatically steers advertising spend toward the highest-performing channels in real time.

This data-driven approach ensures budgets are maximized precisely where candidate intent and mobile traffic are strongest, while simultaneously eliminating wasted spend on stagnant platforms. Rather than relying on rigid, upfront contracts, recruitment teams can adjust their parameters dynamically based on live market signals and shifting candidate behaviors.



Enterprise-scale reliability

This combination of automation and real-time optimization is increasingly central to the strategies of global enterprises and staffing leaders managing complex, high-volume environments - including organizations such as Randstad, Deloitte, The Manpower Group, PwC and Action.

By reducing manual execution and increasing optimization speed, VONQ helps talent acquisition teams smooth out summer hiring twists and turn a quiet season into a measurable hiring advantage.

The numbers behind the seasonal advantage

Summer market conditions create a seasonal sweet spot where employers can improve both hiring outcomes and acquisition economics.

Peak Matching Efficiency

01

Matching efficiency² measures how productively a job market connects vacancies with the right job seekers. In summer, this efficiency peaks due to three distinct factors:

Reduced Noise: Casual applicants who flood portals during the January rush step back, significantly improving the „signal-to-noise“ ratio for recruiters.

Higher Intentionality: Candidates remaining in the talent pool are highly motivated. When the market appears to cool, the connections made are far more precise.

Fewer Frictions: With lower total application volumes to wade through, HR teams and algorithmic screening tools identify the „perfect fit“ faster.

Lower acquisition costs

02

With VONQs Programmatic solution, employers respond dynamically to changing conditions - creating opportunities to maximize recruitment budgets, particularly between July and mid-August.

Lower CPC (Cost Per Click): As traditional advertisers (who may be budget-pacing or on holiday) pull back, the “auction pressure” on job boards drops. This frequently results in a 10-15% decrease in CPC.

Improved CPA (Cost Per Application): Because programmatic algorithms can shift budget in real-time to high-performing mobile traffic, they bypass the inefficiencies of “static” job postings. Organisations are allocating spend toward higher-intent candidate engagement while competition remains lower.



Summer is no longer downtime. It is decision time.

Summer recruitment is no longer defined by lower activity - but by different market conditions.

As this report shows, hiring behaviour is becoming more continuous, candidate engagement increasingly mobile-first, and recruitment economics more favourable during the summer period.

Employers that adapt to these dynamics can benefit from lower competition, stronger candidate intent, and more efficient acquisition costs. This creates a window of opportunity that extends beyond filling vacancies.

Lower CPC, improved CPA, and increased mobile engagement mean organisations can build talent pipelines more efficiently while competitors delay action until traditional hiring peaks return. Combined with automation, optimization, and performance-based execution, summer becomes less of a resource challenge and more of a strategic growth lever.

The implication is clear: waiting until September increasingly means entering the market when competition, advertising pressure, and acquisition costs are already rising.

The organisations that win in Q3 and beyond will not necessarily be those spending more - but those recognizing that summer is no longer a pause in recruitment.

The most valuable candidates will not wait for the market to restart. Increasingly, neither should employers.



1. Euro Indicators, Eurostat:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-euro-indicators/w/3-02102025-ap>
2. What Drives Matching Efficiency? A Tale of Composition and Dispersion, Federal Reserve
<https://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/feds/2011/201110/201110pap.pdf>