

# Talent Mobility



**Healthcare & Life Sciences**  
by PageGroup



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# INTRODUCTION

The world has shifted and changed. Recent trends have become the realities of today, and this has affected the Healthcare and Life Sciences sector positively, in addition to introducing new complexities, challenges and untapped opportunities.

This eBook reflects the insights of our almost 200 Healthcare and Life Sciences consultants located all over the world. They recruit, consult and partner with Healthcare and Life Sciences focused companies to find the C-suite profiles, expert professionals and the necessary support teams that keep the trajectory of business moving forward.

We interviewed our experts to uncover the most important trends that you need to be aware of and how those trends may affect your talent acquisition efforts.

In this eBook, we highlight how the global pandemic has disrupted candidate mobility. Effects of the growing remote work culture and limited travel has made finding key talent increasingly difficult. There are some companies, however, through innovative and flexible approaches to talent search, who have been highly successful.

You will find some sound advice, elements to look out for, and opportunities that our partners from China, Spain, France, the UK, and Saudi Arabia have discovered that might be useful to you.

Feel free to reach out to any of our collaborating consultants in the book to talk about how we can find the right person for your organization.

On behalf of the Healthcare and Lifesciences practice at PageGroup, I wish you an enjoyable read.

Kind regards,  
Cansu Aksu



## Think Locally, Work Globally

Talent mobility in the Healthcare and Life Sciences sector shifts to make room for a post-Covid new normal. The global pandemic called for rapid readjustments within the Healthcare and Life Sciences sector.

As the world comes to grips with these changing demands, companies stay ahead of the game with innovative and flexible approaches to talent search and management.

Talent within the healthcare and life sciences (HLS) sector has been the focus of attention as the world looked to them for solutions to the global healthcare crisis. This important, rapidly growing sector had to align with the global trends that have swept the world of work and mobility. In the sector of life sciences and medical research, specifically, a changed world order has demanded a readjustment to talent mobility. Talent is moving less in some cases, and differently in others. The sources from where the best talent emerges is also changing with the new circumstances.

Roles that were once location based have now become location-agnostic. Page's recruiters are expanding their search to a wider area to fill some functionary roles like business development and regulatory jobs. The openness and flexibility to the concept of remote working is at the heart of this trend. The positive side-effect of a growing remote work culture means that the best candidates could be located further away and can still contribute productively.

Limited mobility emerging from travel restrictions and in some cases complications in paperwork processing between countries has led recruiters to source talent locally by

restricting their search to smaller geographical areas. In some cases, forward-thinking companies are also investing in training and development of local talent to fill the gaps that they foresee in the near future.

An underrated and now-emerging trend is that of internal mobility — hunt and move an individual within the business who might be primed for a move elsewhere.



The reason internal mobility is becoming so exacerbated is that the world of work now is evolving to such an extent that there are many new skills that we haven't needed before," says **Olly Harris**, Global Managing Director, Page Outsourcing.

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A McKinsey special report titled 'The Future of Work after Covid 19', released in February, 2021, surveyed eight countries and found that more than 100 million workers (or 1 in 16) will be forced to find a different occupation by 2030 to cope with the changing skill requirements. A focused push towards internal mobility could be the solution to the growing demand of upskilling and re-skilling talent.





## Spreading the net wider

Greater acceptance to working from home has initiated a sea change in not just attitude to work but also the potential for recruiting talent from afar. Page's consultants across the globe have reported the positive impact of this trend on the quality of hiring. It's no wonder that recruiters and talent alike are cheering.



At the moment, I am working with businesses that I worked with prior to Covid, who previously expected people in the office 4-5 days a week, and now they're open to candidates spending 1-2 days a week in the office. This means that I can stretch my candidate pool to a wider area because someone would consider traveling two hours if they're only doing it once a week. So, I think that this shift has definitely enabled clients to have not only better quality candidates but also a higher quantity of candidates," says [Chloe Baverstock](#), [Michael Page UK](#).



With remote working being increasingly accepted in the HLS sector because of the pandemic, companies are more open to hire candidates from abroad. "A good example is the business development profile, for which it does not matter where the candidate is located," explains [Marta Guiluz](#), [Page Personnel from Spain](#).

There is great value in developing fresh talent, explains [Guiluz](#), as she offers these insights to clients in search of candidates in the HLS sector. "It is important to be flexible in terms of the specific experience and personal profile of the candidates. Be open to junior profiles, develop and upskill them as such candidates tend to be more engaged and loyal to the company. Also consider PhD profiles who may not have enough industry experience but bring a wealth of knowledge to the role. Candidates highly value an employer's openness to the home-office working style since technology permits many positions to be managed from home."



In France, too, the trend of remote working is likely to continue. "Most of our clients expect their employees to come into the office 1-2 days per week. In some pharmaceutical companies, where before Covid 30% of the staff was remote, now 99% of the staff is working from home. It is a big change but one that is poised to continue into the near future," says [Emmanuel Hervio](#), [Michael Page France](#).

"The pandemic has shown that being physically in the office is not the only way to be productive. Covid has forced us to work from home, and we have learned that we can be productive from home as well," says [Baverstock](#).

## Hiring goes hyper-local for some functions

Travel and movement are heavily restricted around the world since 2020, and continues to be the trend in the near future, pushing for organisations to devise innovative solutions to work and living. Within the HLS hiring space, the wide talent pool is coming to terms with the value in seeking openings at hospitals and labs closer home. This presents several challenges to hiring, especially for specialist roles liked doctors, nurses and lab technicians for which recruiters will have to train their lens in a limited geographical area to find the best fit.

With international mobility coming to a standstill, recruiters are increasingly turning their attention to assessing the potential of local talent to meet the need gaps.



In Africa, in the past three years, more recruitment was done at a local level within the HLS industry. In the medical device sector, pharmaceuticals, clinical research and biotechnology, companies have been making a positive impact in the country by hiring local talent. It helps that there is an increase in quality of skills in talent available locally. This trend has helped reduce the costs of bringing expatriates into the country, says Valentin Demande, Michael Page Middle East.

Demande explains that local hiring is the

preferred trend also because of visa restrictions in the Middle East, and the 'Saudi-ization' of employment, which is the trend of giving opportunity to local talent over bringing in expatriates.

"Many HLS clients have put in place graduate programs to develop talent locally to save time, effort and costs. This trend has started specifically as a response to the challenges from the pandemic," adds Demande.

China is seeking Chinese overseas returnees to fill the need gap for leadership talents.



In China, the big mobility trend is about attracting overseas returnees professionals making their way back to their home country from leading successful stints overseas. As the China healthcare sector is mainly driven by domestic pharma players and the fast-growing biotech sector invested by local and global private equity and venture capital funds, the market is mainly interested to relocate Chinese candidates who speak the language and understand local culture despite their current nationality. This is making China increasingly look for global talent as well, although it is quite difficult to source the right fit," says Maria Karp, Page Executive China.



## Hiring goes hyper-local for some functions

Karp explains the strategic reasons that China is forced to look outside its neighbourhood to fill job roles. “Rapid expansion of the Chinese HLS sector resulted in talent gaps and the emergence of job types which never before existed in China. Coupled with the rapid augmentation of new technologies, such as gene and cell therapy, mRNA vaccine etc., this has led to deeply unmet talent needs in China’s healthcare and life sciences market. This is especially relevant for drug discovery, clinical development, CMC (drug chemistry, manufacturing and controls) and biomanufacturing scope. Thus, for some jobs, the global talent pool is the major source of candidates, and mobility is essential.”

Local hiring is on the rise in the UK, too, because of larger political shifts. Baverstock says, “Brexit has made international mobility more difficult between the UK and the rest of Europe, in which clients must be willing to

sponsor the candidates and pay relocation costs, too. So, local hiring is a bigger and more serious option than it earlier was.

“Recruiters have a wider talent pool to choose from for the roles that can be remote, including regulatory affairs, biometrics and medical affairs. The hiring challenges come into play for niche positions for which companies need to search outside the country. A few of these are Reagent specialists, roles in Sterile Injectables and Sterile manufacturing along with the increasing need for QP’s,” says Baverstock.

“International mobility into France has always had its challenges, particularly because of the need to know the local language to operate smoothly. Fewer international candidates (about 2%-3% in all of my hires in the last seven years) opt to move to France,” says Hervio.



## Internal mobility: The future beckons

Internal mobility is an emerging trend that is often overlooked, says Harris, and explains that it is because clients operate in a silo. “When there is a need to hire, they go externally, and this is actually without talent acquisition even being aware of such a need or demand. There are few clients that truly understand the potential of the individuals that they have within their organization. The question to ask is: What skills do they already have? The client is far better off assessing those existing skills and then up-skilling, training and growing the internal talent.

Harris explains that the internal mobility trend, if taken seriously, has the potential to address the issue of the new job titles that are bound to grow in demand in the near future. “These are skills that do not even exist today. There is no point in going to market to look for those skills. They don’t

exist! The only option we, therefore, have is to train internal company employees up. This means that we move into the world of hiring for potential and skills rather than hiring for job titles. And when hiring and growing your talent, you are far better looking at your existing internal pool,” says Harris.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Healthcare and Life Sciences sector had to readjust its talent policies to suit a new, Covid-hit world that demanded flexibility, innovation and creativity in hiring. The growing remote work culture benefited many roles that are not dependent on lab or hospital work. At the same time, the field witnessed some hiring challenges when limited travel and movement forced recruiters to look locally to fill the need gaps. Here are the trends that emerged.



Remote working expanded the search for some HLS roles to a wider area, attracting great talent from afar.



Restrictions on travel, difficulties in paperwork processing limited the search for some other roles to a smaller geographical area.



Internal mobility, or upskilling and moving candidates within a company, promises to prepare the world of work to meet the needs of new, not-as-yet identified skillsets.



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