Media release for Adecco Group Switzerland

Study shows: these are the skills that companies are looking for

Zurich, 18 April 2024 – The situation on the Swiss labour market is becoming darker. The job index began to show a decline at the end of 2023, and then this negative trend continued in the first quarter of 2024. If job seekers want to successfully hold their own on the labour market, it is crucial that they acquire the specific skills that employees are looking for. The Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index, a scientifically substantiated study conducted by the Adecco Group Switzerland and the University of Zurich's Swiss job market monitor, offers an insight into the key skills in question.

Development Job Index vs. GPD

The Swiss labour market continued its downward trend at the beginning of 2024. The Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index, which was already showing a drop of four percent in the last quarter (Q4 2023), recorded a further three-percent decrease in job vacancies. This is four percent lower than in the same quarter of the previous year (Q1 2023). This means that the index level in the first quarter of 2024 was comparable to the first quarter of 2022.

'After a marked slowdown in job growth during 2023, the job market then experienced another decline at the beginning of 2024. Despite this development, the current labour market situation is still very good compared with before the pandemic.'

Marcel Keller, Country President Adecco Group Switzerland

Special focus: skills on the labour market

The recent developments on the labour market are reflected in the general public's view, as demonstrated by the consumer sentiment survey conducted by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) for the month of February. This survey shows a decline in labour market indicators for job security sentiment and expectations of unemployment trends. The results of the

survey and the current progression of the job index indicate that finding a job has become more challenging. 'Anyone specifically trying to acquire the skills that employers are looking for will increase their chances of success', explains Yanik Kipfer from the Swiss Job Market Monitor.

To gain a better understanding of the challenges of the labour market, our study analysed demand for skills across five different professional groups. These professional groups cover office, service, IT, industrial and healthcare professions. The aim was to identify the five most important skills that employees are particularly looking for in each professional group.

The study showed that leadership skills are particularly sought after across multiple professional groups. It also became clear that IT skills were vital not only in IT professions, but also in technical ones.

For this analysis, we took a closer look at the skills cited in job advertisements. In these job advertisements, companies provide information about the qualities, skills and knowledge that are required and desired to fill the position. In particular, they explicitly name requirements that are especially important, not considered obvious, or not implicitly covered by training.

Business and administrative specialists

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP: business and administrative specialists

These are the 5 skills most in demand in job advertisements –
for example for event managers, real estate agents or customer service managers

RANKING	SKILLS
1	Leadership and motivation
2	Supervising a team
3	Applying entrepreneurial and financial skills
4	Guiding others
5	Planning and organizing

The professional group of business and administrative specialists includes professions such as event manager, customer service manager or estate agent. Employers in this group place particular emphasis on leadership skills and qualities, as these professions are often required to take responsibility for teams or projects. This means that applicants who can demonstrate leadership experience will have a clear advantage over other candidates.

As well as leadership experience, employers also set great store by a strong cost awareness (e.g. in resource management and use) and an in-depth understanding of market activity. For example, an event manager must be able to stick to their budget targets, whilst an estate agent needs a sound knowledge of real estate market behaviour in order to correctly assess a property's value.

Specialists in healthcare professions

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP: healthcare specialists

These are the 5 skills most in demand in job advertisements –
for example for nursing staff, doctors or pharmacists

RANKING	SKILLS
1	Professional skills (e.g., experience in emergency management)
2	Leadership and motivation
3	Social skills
4	Maintaining a positive attitude
5	Flexibility (e.g., in terms of working hours)

The professional group of specialists in healthcare professions includes nursing specialists, medical professionals and pharmacists. Of the key skills in this professional group, top of the list is sound professional expertise – in other words, a comprehensive understanding of the specialist field. For example, an emergency doctor needs both sound theoretical knowledge and practical experience in order to diagnose the symptoms of a heart attack and intervene as required. Leadership skills are also in demand: work in this professional group often takes place in a team context. Surgical procedures require coordinated collaboration between surgeons, specialist nurses and anaesthetists. This means that surgeons with leadership skills and experience, for example, will have a crucial advantage.

In addition, social skills and a positive attitude are vital. Specialists in healthcare professions, such as nursing specialists, must be able to handle complex, unpredictable and stressful situations without neglecting the human side of their work.

'Specialist expertise and social skills are closely linked in healthcare professions. Empathy and understanding form the basis for successfully putting expertise into practice. This is the only way to ensure comprehensive, holistic care.'

Corinne Scheiber, VP Adecco Medical Switzerland

Personal service professions

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP: Personal service professions

These are the 5 skills most in demand in job advertisements –
for example for chefs, waiters or housekeeping managers

RANKING	SKILLS
1	Supervising a team
2	Applying health-related skills (e.g., hygiene awareness)
3	Instructing others
4	Leadership and motivation
5	Flexibility (e.g., in terms of working hours)

Personal service professions cover roles such as chefs, service specialists or housekeeping managers. Various professions in this group (such as department heads) are responsible for running teams, which makes specialists with leadership experience and skills highly valued by employers.

As well as leadership skills, employers are particularly interested in employees with a high level of cleanliness, physical fitness, and a strong awareness of hygiene (health-related skills and capabilities). These skills are crucial for maintaining a secure, productive work environment. At the same time, good physical health allows employees to effectively meet the physical challenges of their work, such as long periods spent standing in service professions. Furthermore, like healthcare specialists, applicants in this group are required to show a certain degree of flexibility.

Technical engineers and similar specialists

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP: Technical engineers and similar specialists

These are the 5 skills most in demand in job advertisements –
for example for electrotechnicians, machine builders or chemical laboratory technicians

RANKING	SKILLS
1	CAD programming
2	Compliance with legal and organizational guidelines
3	Content software
4	SPS programming
5	Project management software

For the professional group of technical engineers and similar specialists, such as laboratory chemists, electrical engineers and mechanical engineers, comprehensive IT skills and regulatory knowledge are hugely important. The particular focus here is on IT skills, such as using CAD (computer-aided design) software. A knowledge of programs like AutoCAD, Revit and SolidWorks is often mentioned. These tools are required to design products and produce technical drawings. Programmable logic controller (PLC) programming skills are also important. PLCs are computer systems used in industry to automatically control and monitor machinery and production processes. As well as CAD and PLC expertise, a good command of various pieces of project management software (such as Microsoft Project) is also valued. These enable projects and production processes to be planned and implemented efficiently.

Furthermore, using Office programs is a vital skill for specialists in this professional group. Alongside digital skills, employers set great store by an in-depth understanding of legal and organisational guidelines, which are particularly crucial in ensuring compliance standard adherence and quality assurance in product development. A knowledge of good manufacturing practices (GMP) and current good manufacturing practices (cGMP) is frequently cited in job advertisements for this professional group. This is because many specialists from this professional group are employed in the pharmaceutical and chemical industries, where GMP and cGMP serve as standards for manufacturing pharmaceutical products.

'Ongoing digitalisation has resulted in permanent change to technical professions, and the ability to handle computer technologies has become essential. IT skills have become a vital part of the qualification profile for technicians.'

James Peck, VP LHH Recruitment Solutions Switzerland

Software and IT app developers and analysts

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP: Developers and analysts
of software and IT applications

These are the 5 skills most in demand in job advertisements –
for example for software engineers or system architects

RANKING	SKILLS
1	Development of user interfaces
2	Software testing
3	Requirements engineering
4	Configuration management
5	Programming languages

The professional group of software and IT app developers and analysts includes a range of IT specialists, such as system architects, software engineers and test automation engineers. Skills in and a knowledge of design for graphical user interfaces are top of the list in this professional group's skill rankings. Responsive design, UI (user interface) and UX (user experience) skills are particularly in demand. Another vital element for employers in this professional group is skills in software testing and requirements engineering – the process that determines what a new system or piece of software needs to be able to do, based on the users' needs and wants. These skills are crucial in order to translate user needs into technical specifications and ensure the development of fault-free applications.

Another of the top-five skills is configuration management. This is a process that ensures consistent, controlled set-up and maintenance of computer systems. This guarantees that systems function reliably and changes can be seamlessly made to these systems. For example, specialist knowledge of Docker (a technology for executing software in isolated environments, or containers) and Jenkins (a tool for automating software tests and deployments) is particularly valued. Finally, employers also require a knowledge of programming languages, focusing in particular on skills with Java, Javascript, C# or Python.

'The technology landscape in software development is constantly changing: new technologies are emerging whilst others are becoming less relevant. This requires software developers to not only be familiar with the technologies currently dominating the market, but also stay up to date with future developments. A recently published Adecco Group study highlights this need: the study shows that the growing use of artificial intelligence in companies will significantly increase demand for specialists with digital and AI-specific skills in the near future.'

Stéphane Dévarenne, Head of Operations Switzerland, Akkodis

Methods and data

In collaboration with the Adecco Group Switzerland and as part of the current Job Index publication, the Job Market Monitor Switzerland of the Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich examines which skills companies are looking for. In job advertisements, companies provide information about the necessary and desired characteristics, skills and knowledge for a position, with particular emphasis on those requirements that are not (yet) taken for granted.

The results presented here are based on the Job Index data (Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index) for the period from the 3rd quarter of 2014 to the 1st quarter of 2024. This quarterly data includes data from the 12 largest Swiss job platforms. It is also based on job advertisements from almost 1,500 company websites, which represent a random sample stratified by industry and company size that is representative for Switzerland.

Over a period of ten years, information on the skills in demand was extracted from job advertisements in German, French, Italian, English and other foreign languages. These advertisements come from companies in German-speaking Switzerland as well as French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland. The importance of the individual skills for the occupational group was determined on the basis of the relative deviation from the average value across all occupational groups.

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About the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index (Job Index)

In collaboration with the Swiss Job Market Monitor (SJMM) at the Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich, the Adecco Group Switzerland publishes the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index (Job Index) in January, April, July and October. The Job Index provides Switzerland with a scientifically substantiated and comprehensive measure of the development of job offers on online job portals and company websites. It is based on representative quarterly surveys of job offers in the press, on online job portals and on company websites.

The Adecco Group Switzerland brand family

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