

Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity Report

October 2026

Media & events industry hiring activity – July-September 2026

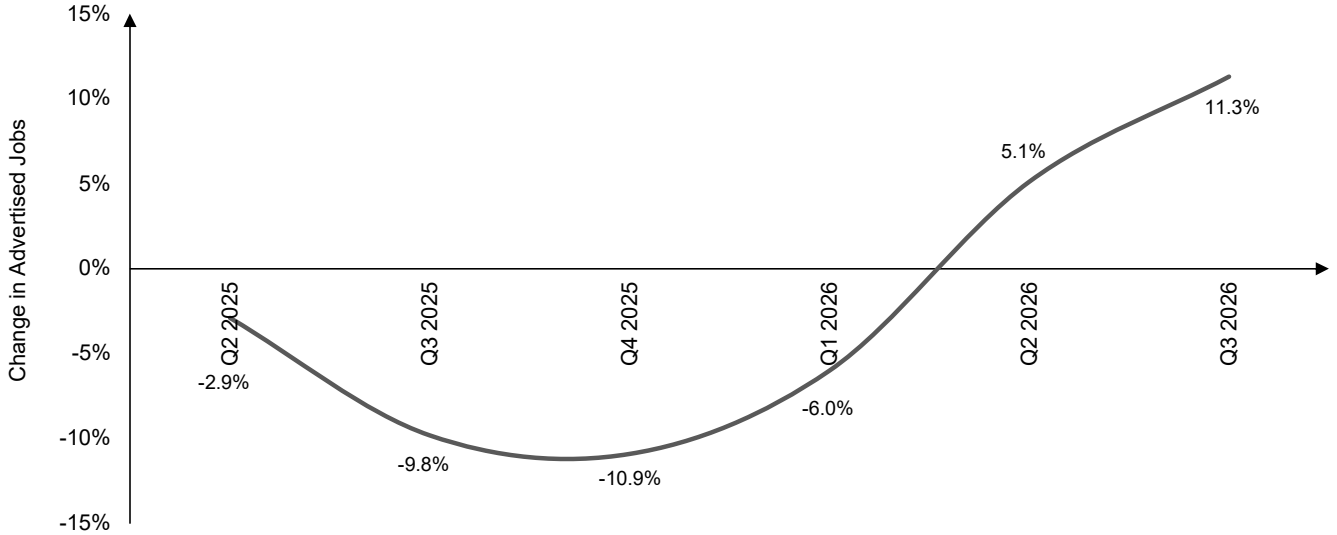
Overall findings

- **Media & events industry hiring grew 11.3%** year-on-year in Q3 2026, the strongest result in over two years. The quarter marks the second consecutive period of growth following five straight quarters of decline, possibly signaling a market recovery.
- **Hiring activity reached 1,166 roles in Q3 2026,** up 15.2% on Q2 2026. July–September is historically the strongest quarter of the year, and this Q3 surpassed its 2024 equivalent (1,162), confirming the market has fully recovered to pre-downturn levels.
- **Melbourne continues to outpace Sydney,** growing 31.1% year-on-year compared to Sydney's 7.8%. Melbourne has now outperformed Sydney in three consecutive quarters, representing a structural shift in where media industry hiring activity is concentrated.
- **Nine and News Corp remain the market's dominant hirers,** though both declined year-on-year. Domain (+375%), Tennis Australia (+183%) and Cartology (+91%) posted the strongest growth among established employers.
- **AI-titled roles reached 24 in Q3 2026,** the highest quarterly total on record and 140% above Q3 2025. Nine, News Corp, Google and TikTok are the most active, with role types now spanning Engineers, Directors and Enablement Managers, signaling AI capability embedding broadly across organisations.
- **The key driver for the quarter was the events sector,** with the Rugby World Cup (25 roles), Fever (26), Football Australia (9), Kmart (6) and Myer Media Network (5) all appearing for the first time. Tapt Media increased its hiring as an independent entity.

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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

YoY Growth

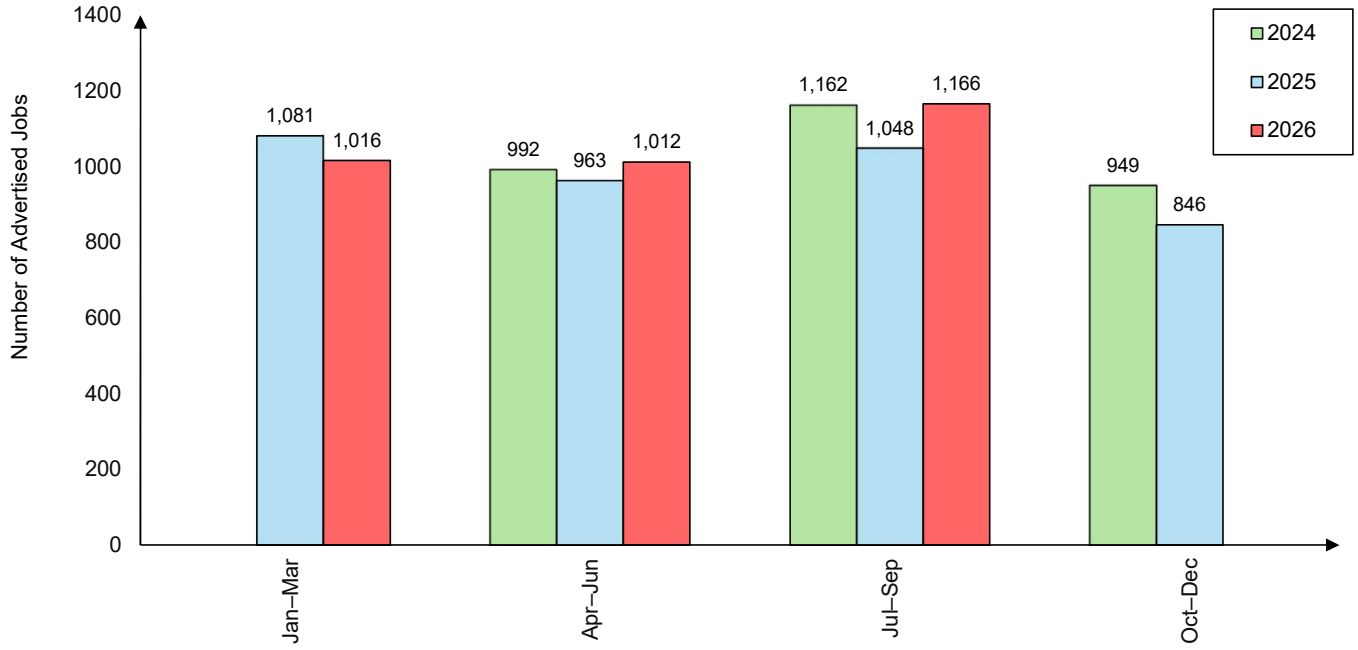


Mercury Talent tracks advertised jobs as follows:
- Publishers, broadcasters, OOH/retail media, B2B media/events, large scale events, search/social, programmatic, adtech
- All roles and job functions
- Sydney and Melbourne

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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Quarterly Advertised Jobs: 2024, 2025, 2026

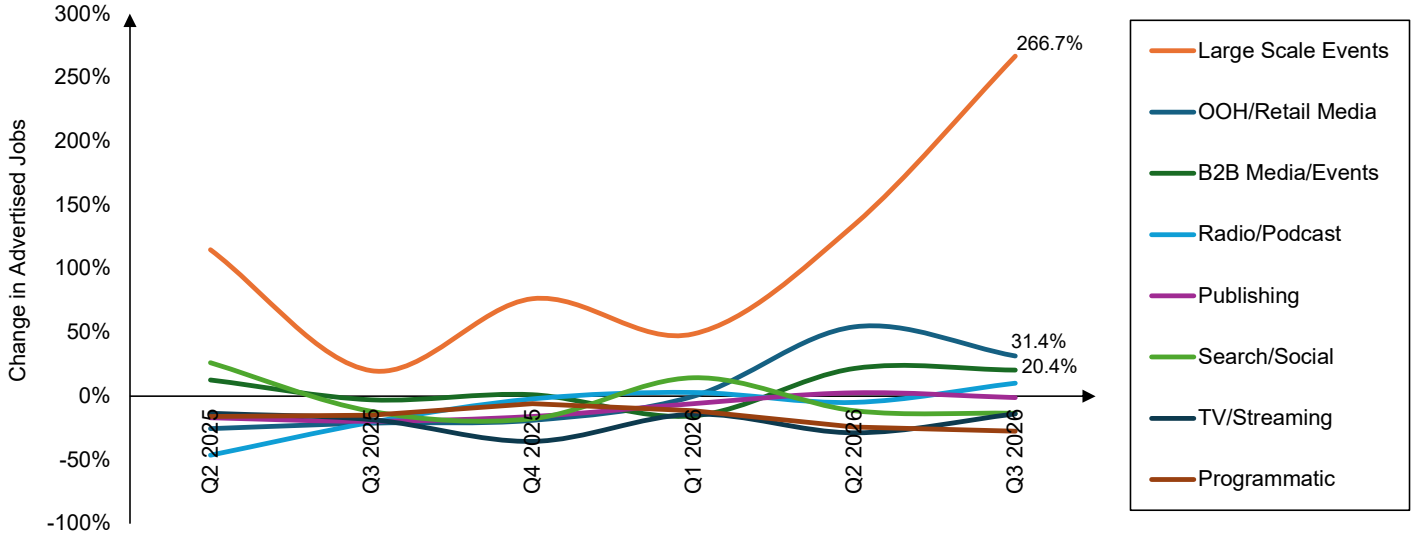


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

YoY Growth, By Media/Events Type

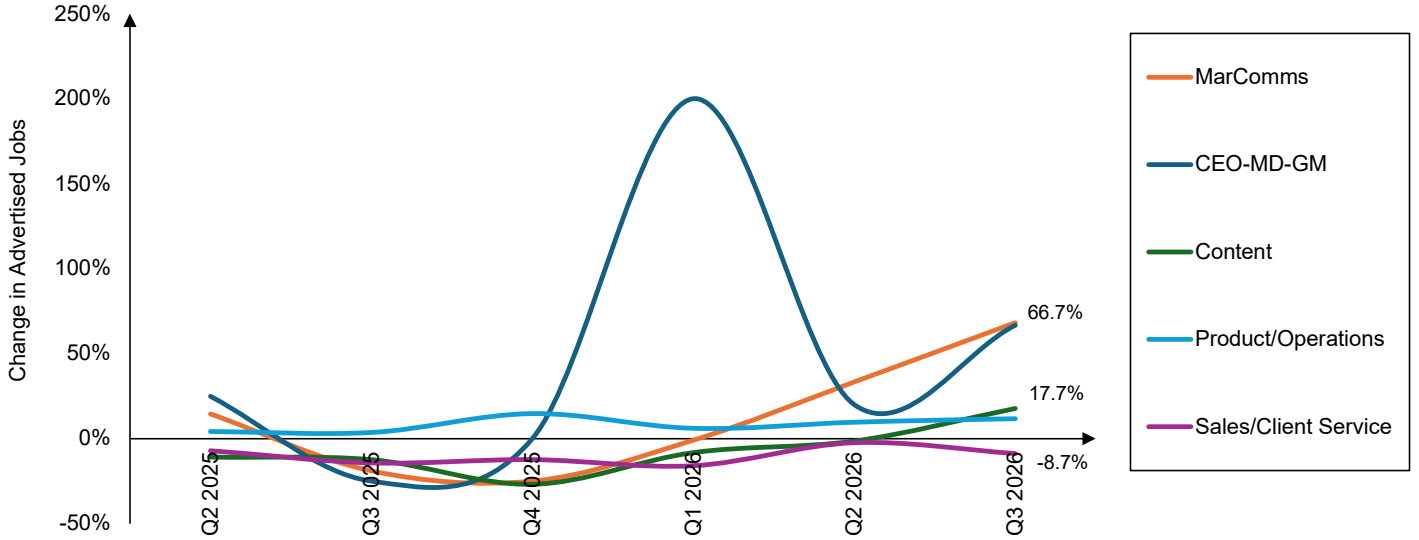


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

YoY Growth, By Job Function

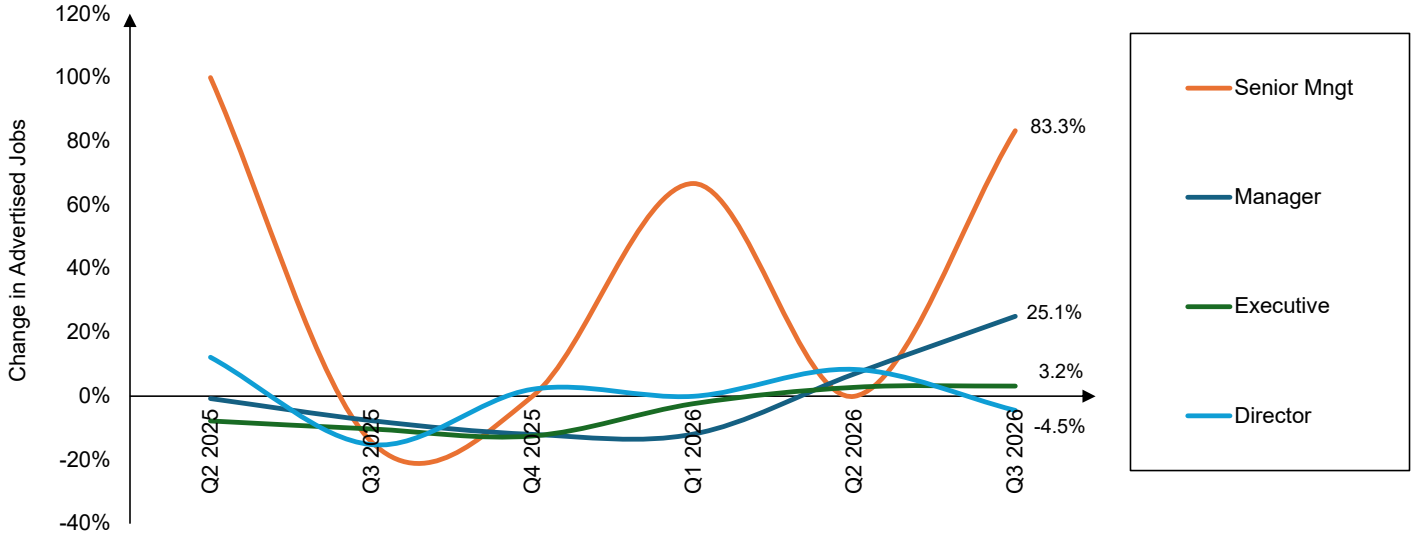


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

YoY Growth, By Seniority

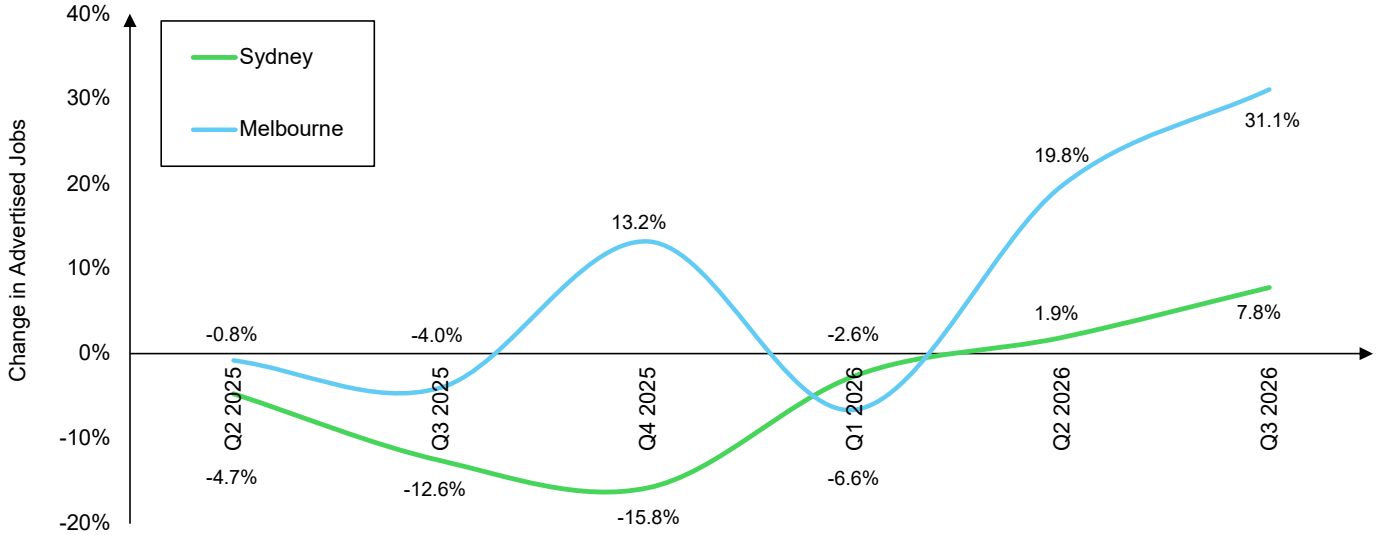


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

YoY Growth, By Location

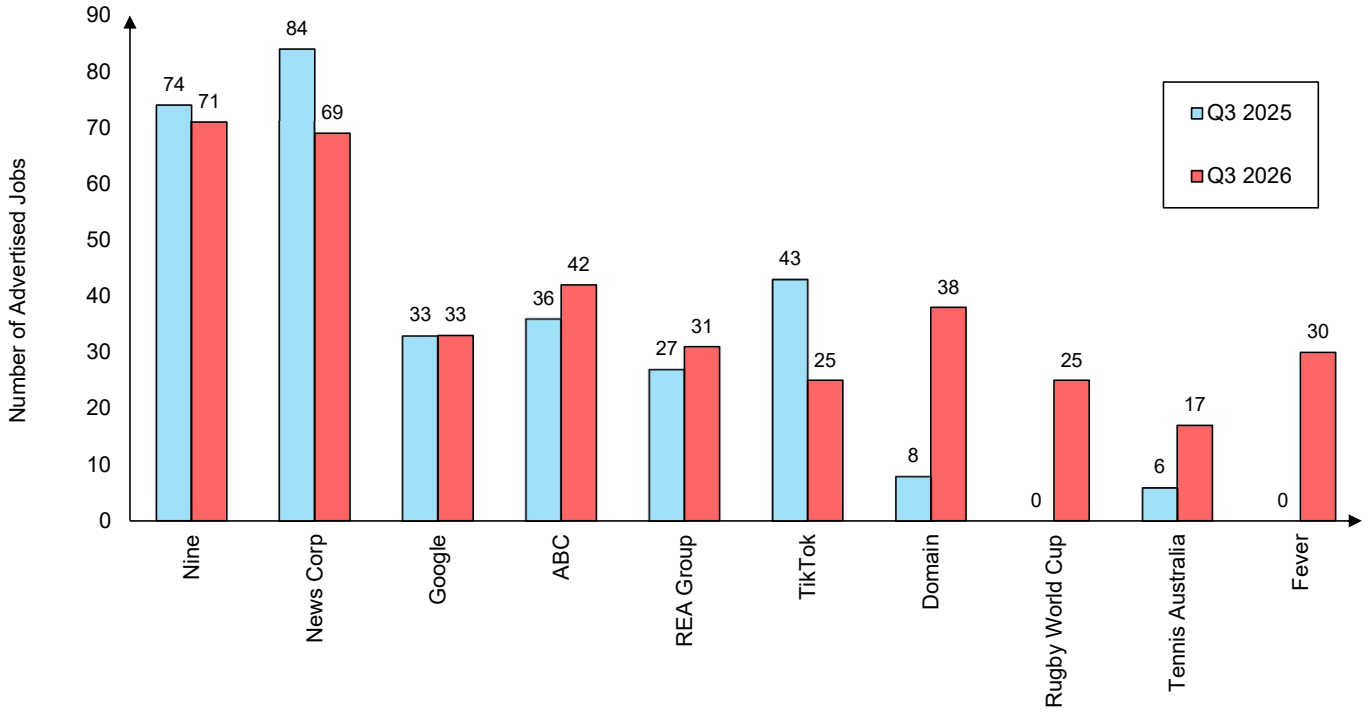


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Top 10 Hirers

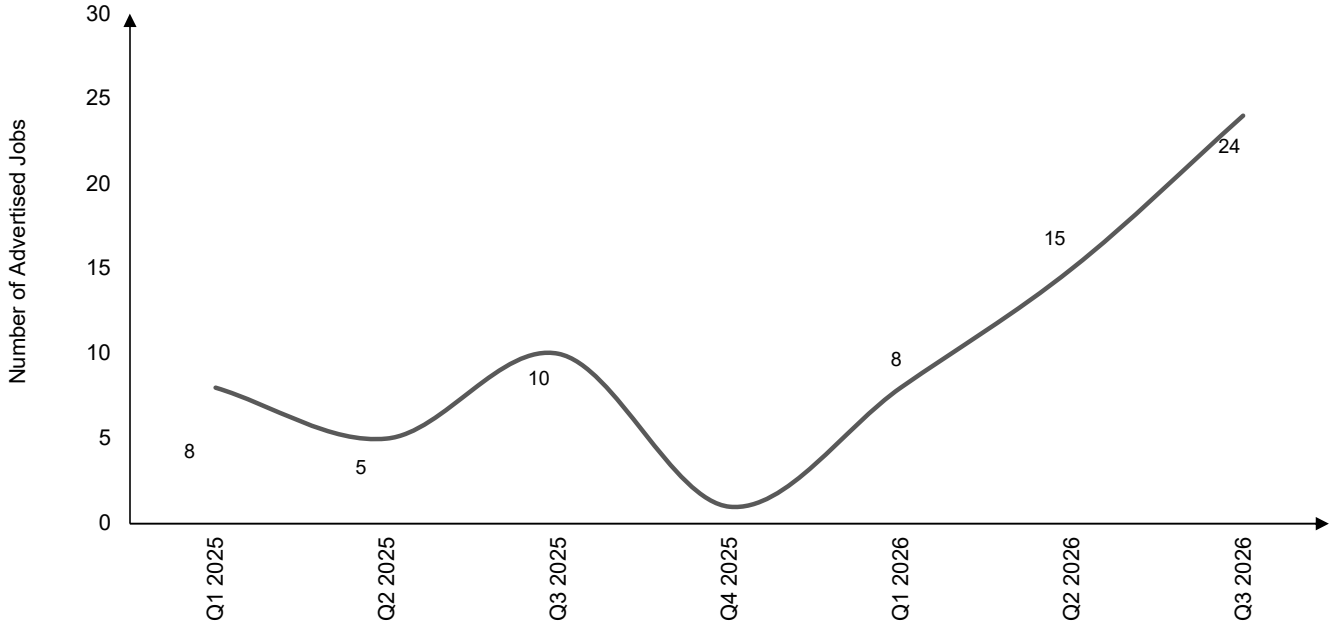
July-September 2026



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Number of Jobs with AI in the Job Title

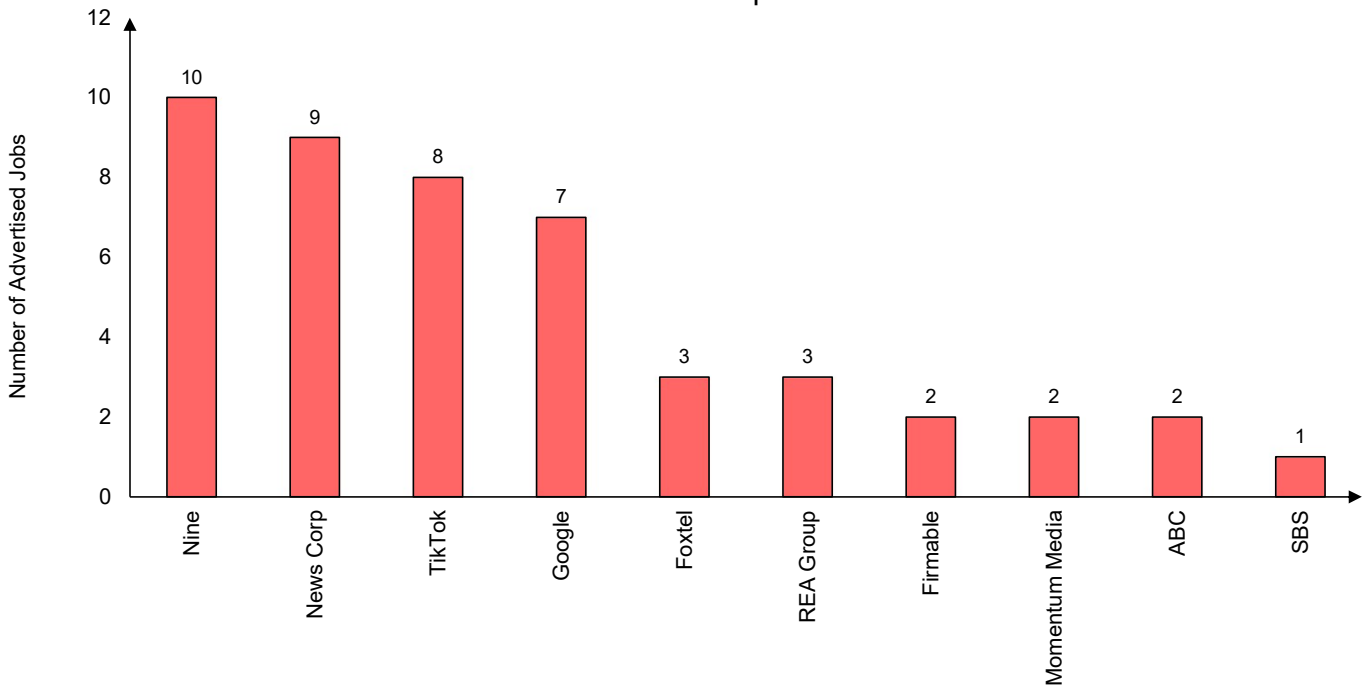


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Companies that recruited for roles with AI or Prompt in the job title

Jan 2025 - Sept 2026



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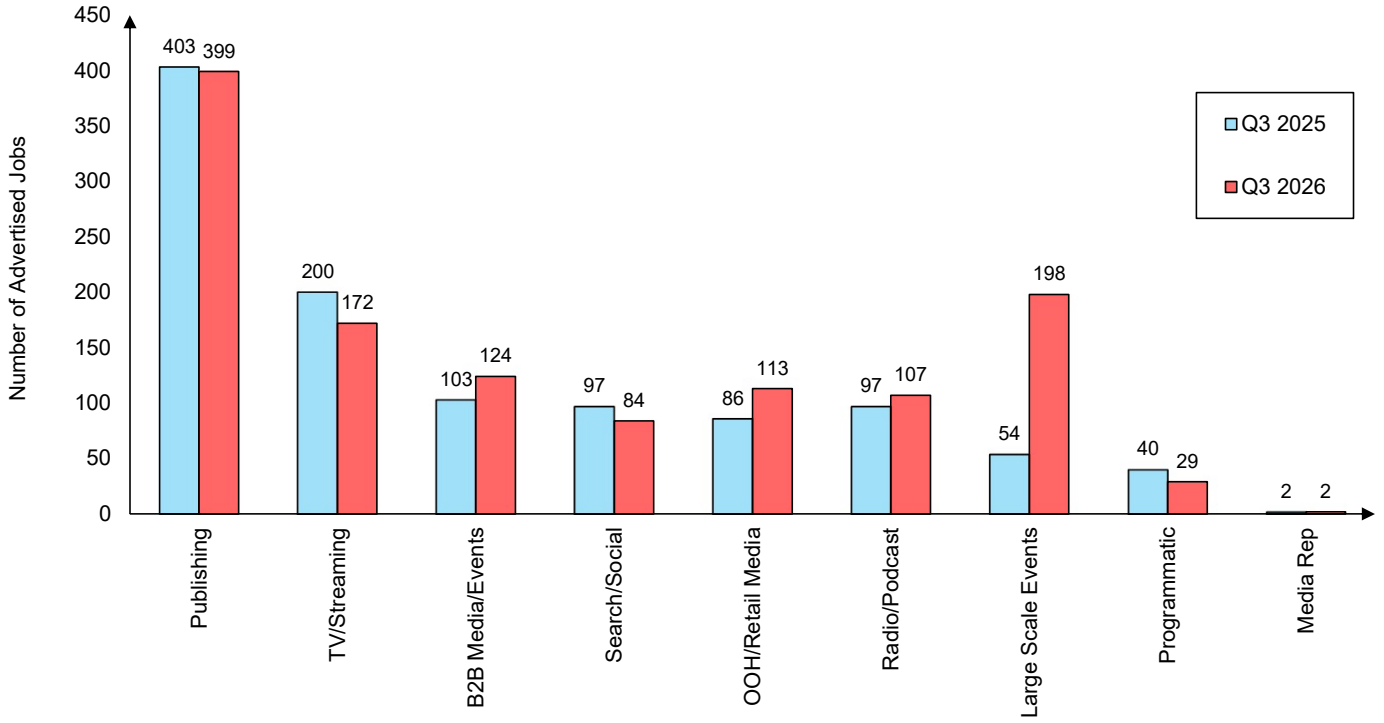
Findings by media type

- **Large Scale Events was the standout sector** of the quarter, growing 267% year-on-year to 198 roles. The surge was driven by Rugby World Cup, Fever, AFL, Football Australia and Cricket Australia hiring simultaneously, though much of this activity is event-calendar specific and likely to normalise in Q4.
- **OOH/Retail Media continued its strong recovery,** growing 31.4% year-on-year following a 54.3% surge in Q2 2026. Cartology (+91%) and Val Morgan (+83%) led growth, while new retail media entrants Kmart, Myer Media Network and MixIn reflect the ongoing expansion of retailer-owned media networks.
- **B2B Media/Events posted back-to-back double-digit growth** with a 20.4% year-on-year increase. Growth is broad-based across many players rather than driven by one dominant hirer, with Prime Creative Media (+45%) the sector's most active hirer.
- **Publishing stabilised at -1.0% year-on-year** after a brief recovery in Q2 2026, suggesting the sector has stopped falling but has yet to find sustainable growth. News Corp and Medium Rare are contracting, while Domain and ABC are the notable bright spots.
- **TV/Streaming remained the weakest sector,** down 14.0% year-on-year for the sixth consecutive quarter of decline. ABC (+52%) and Foxtel (+54%) are the exceptions, with Seven Network (-31%), News24 (-25%) and Netflix (-56%) all pulling back significantly.
- **Hiring activity in Programmatic continued to deteriorate,** declining 27.5% year-on-year, its worst result on record and the second consecutive quarter of decline. Search/Social also fell 13.4%, with TikTok's -42% decline the primary driver.

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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Q3 2026, By Media/Events Type

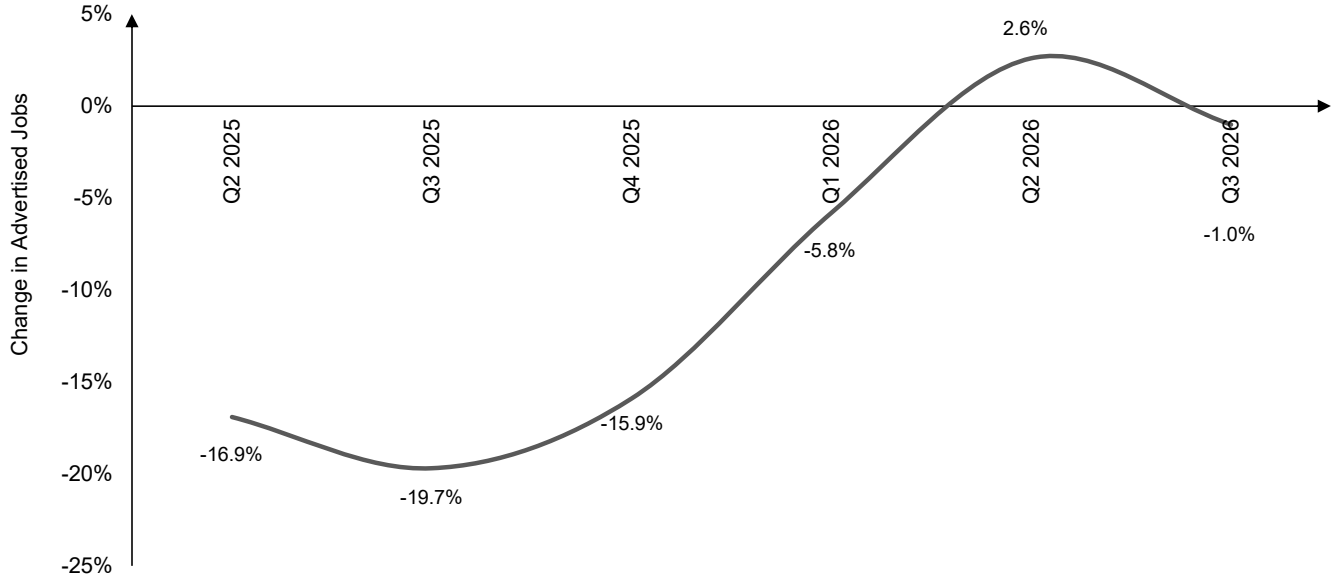


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Publishing sector, YoY Growth

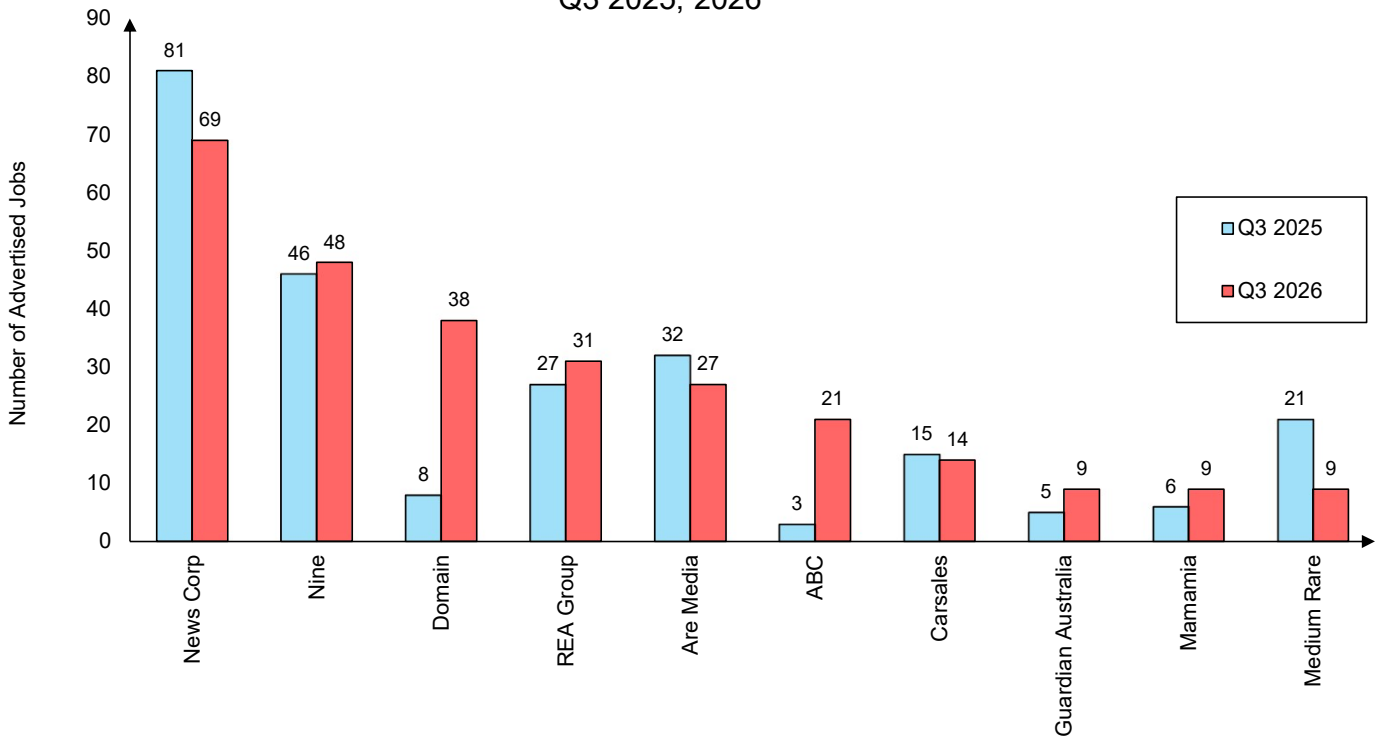


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Top 10 Publishing Employers

Q3 2025, 2026

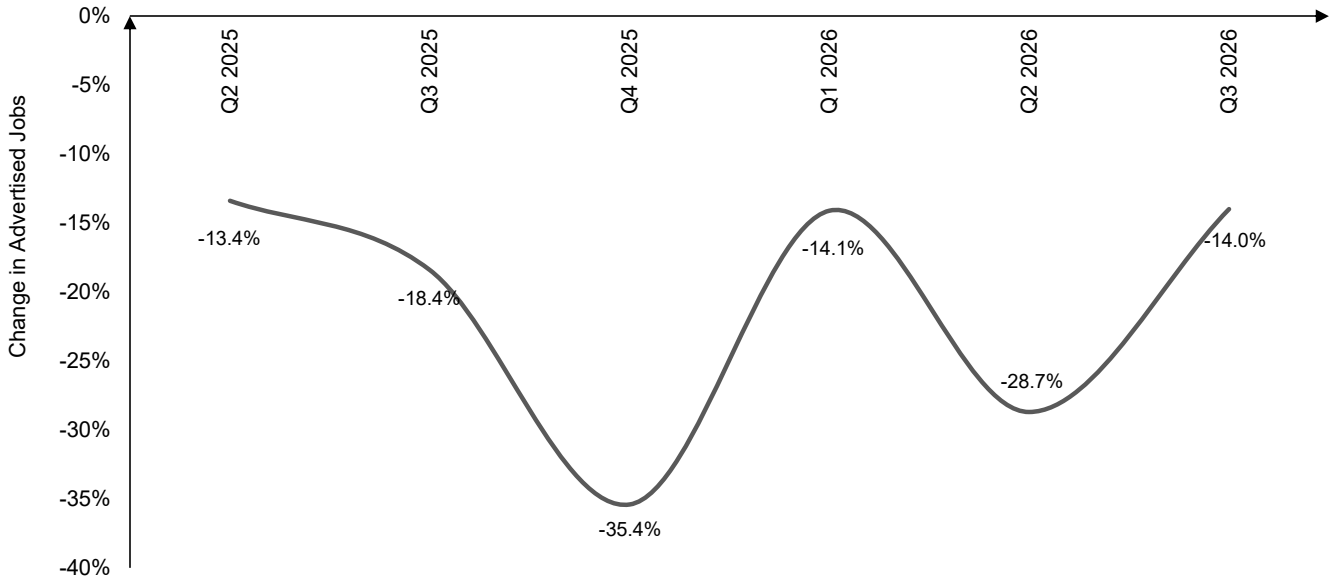


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

TV/Streaming sector, YoY Growth

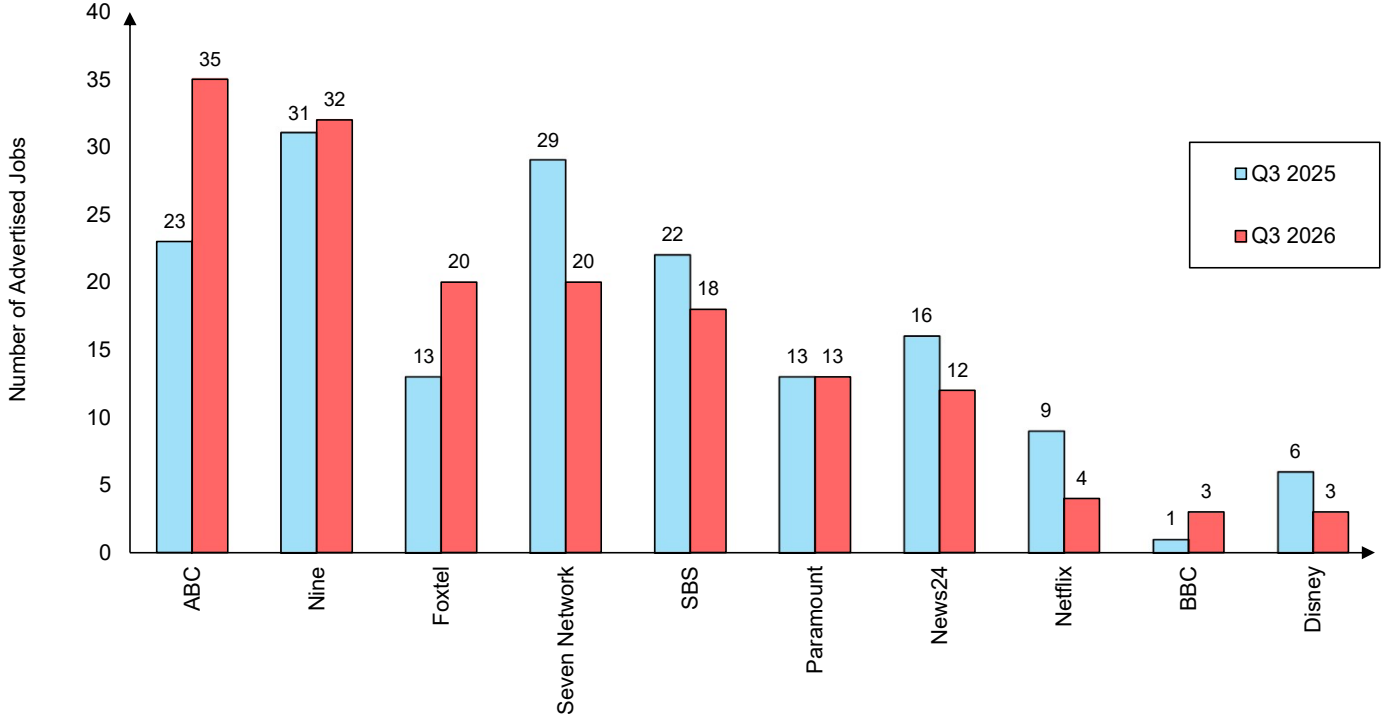


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Top 10 TV/Streaming Employers

Q3 2025, 2026

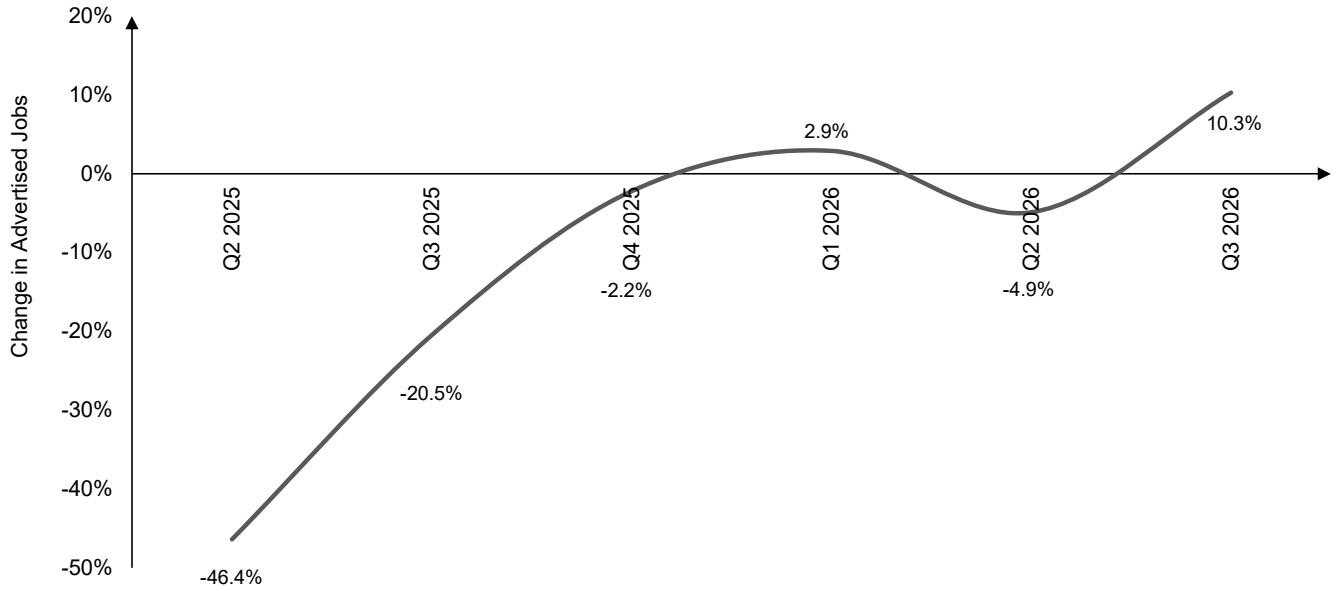


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Radio/Podcast sector, YoY Growth

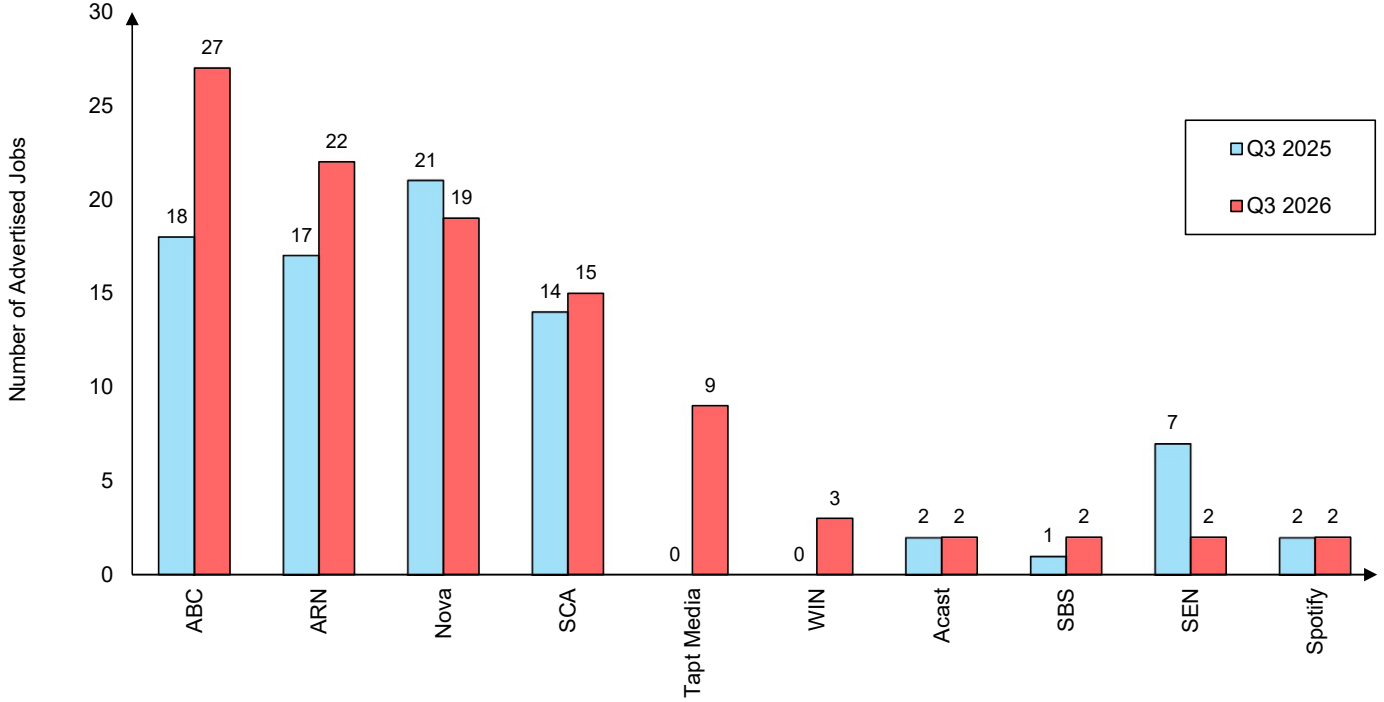


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Top 10 Radio/Podcast Employers

Q3 2025, 2026

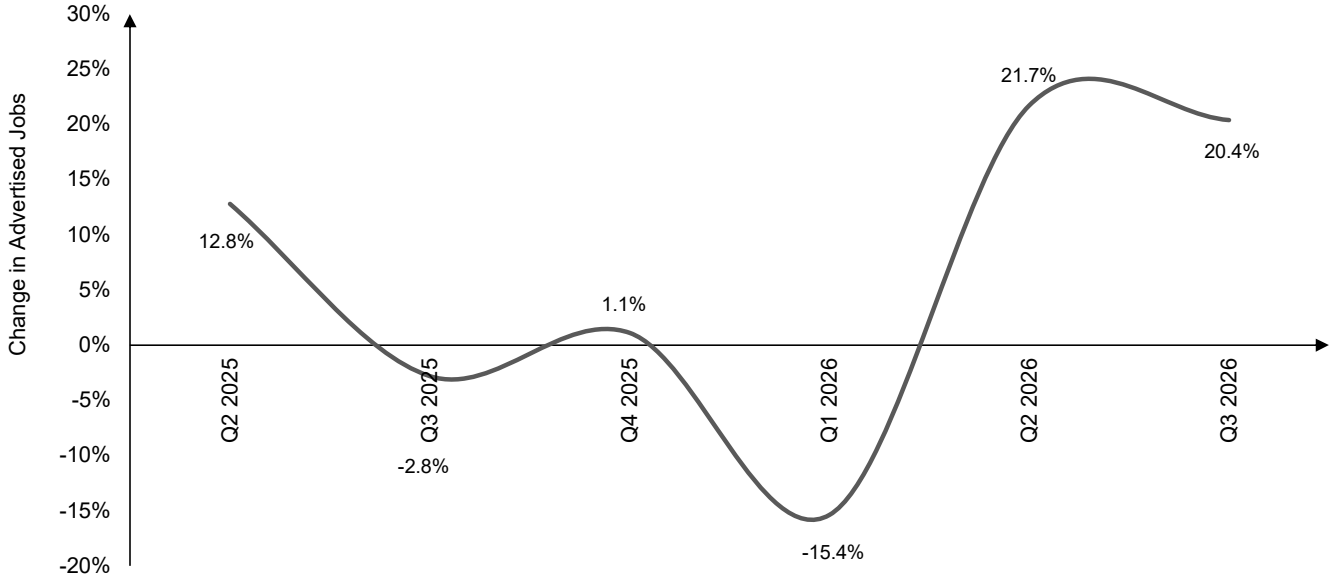


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

B2B Media/Events sector, YoY Growth

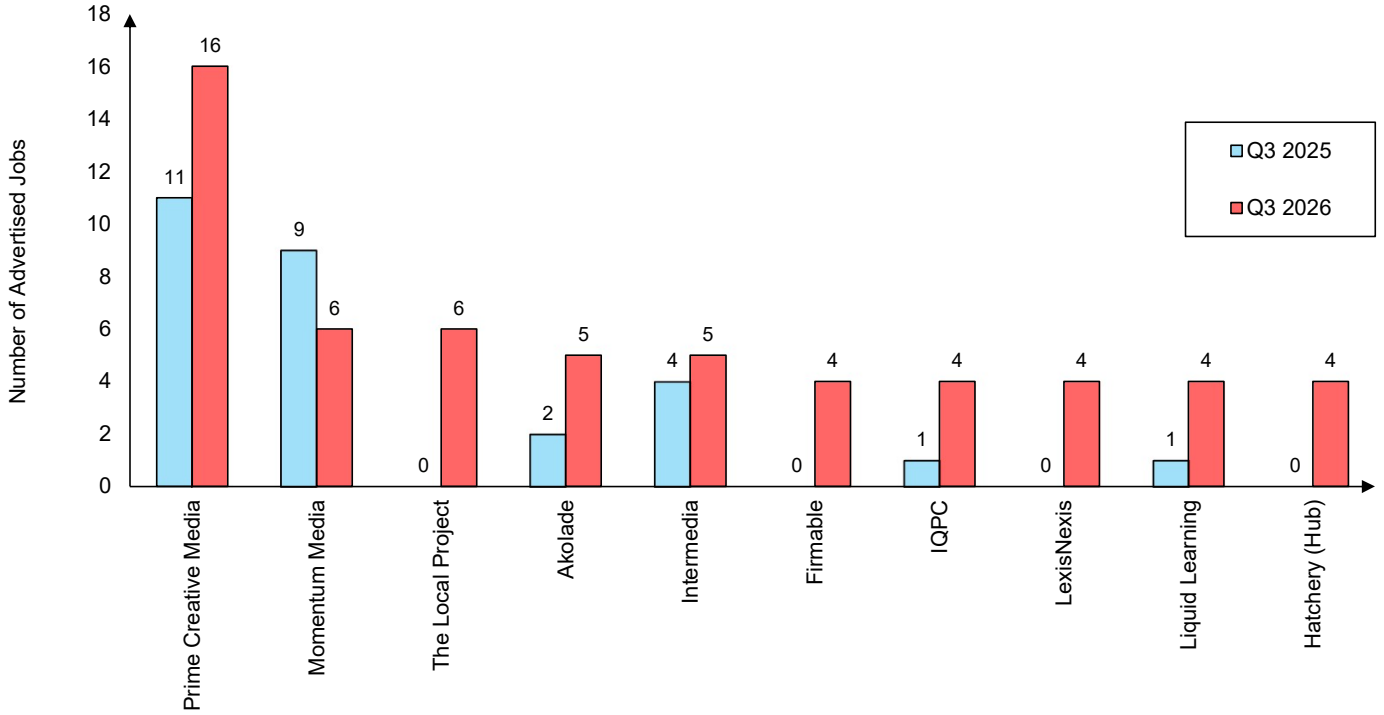


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Top 10 B2B Media/Events Employers

Q3 2025, 2026

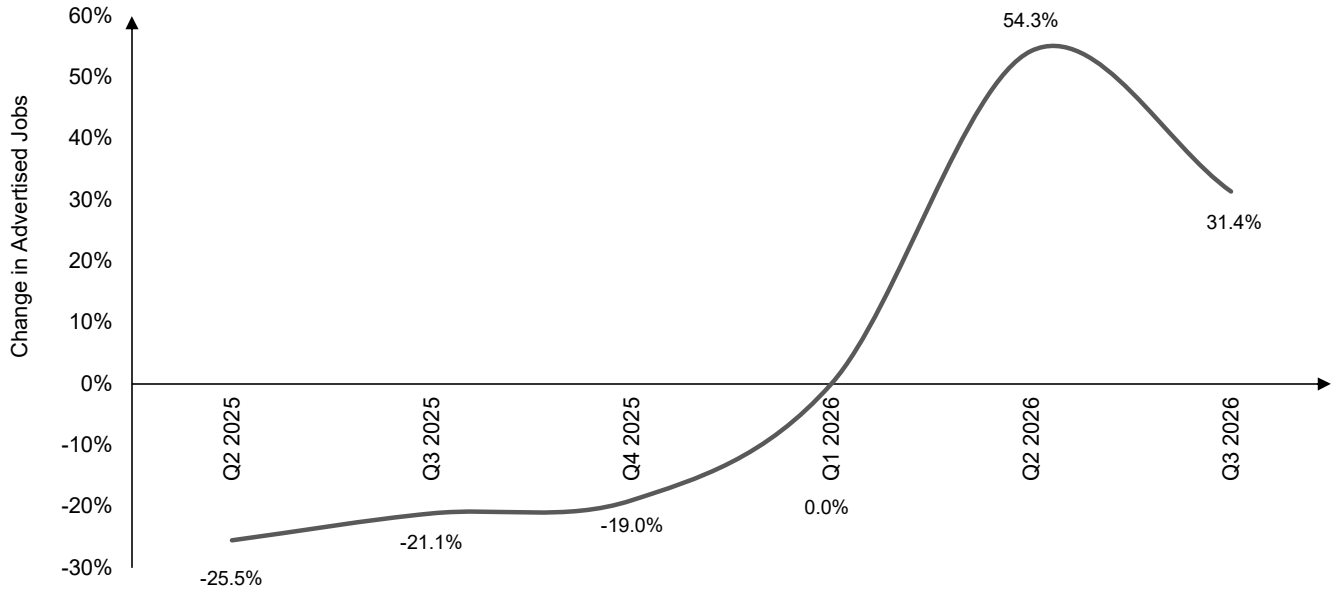


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

OOH/Retail Media sector, YoY Growth

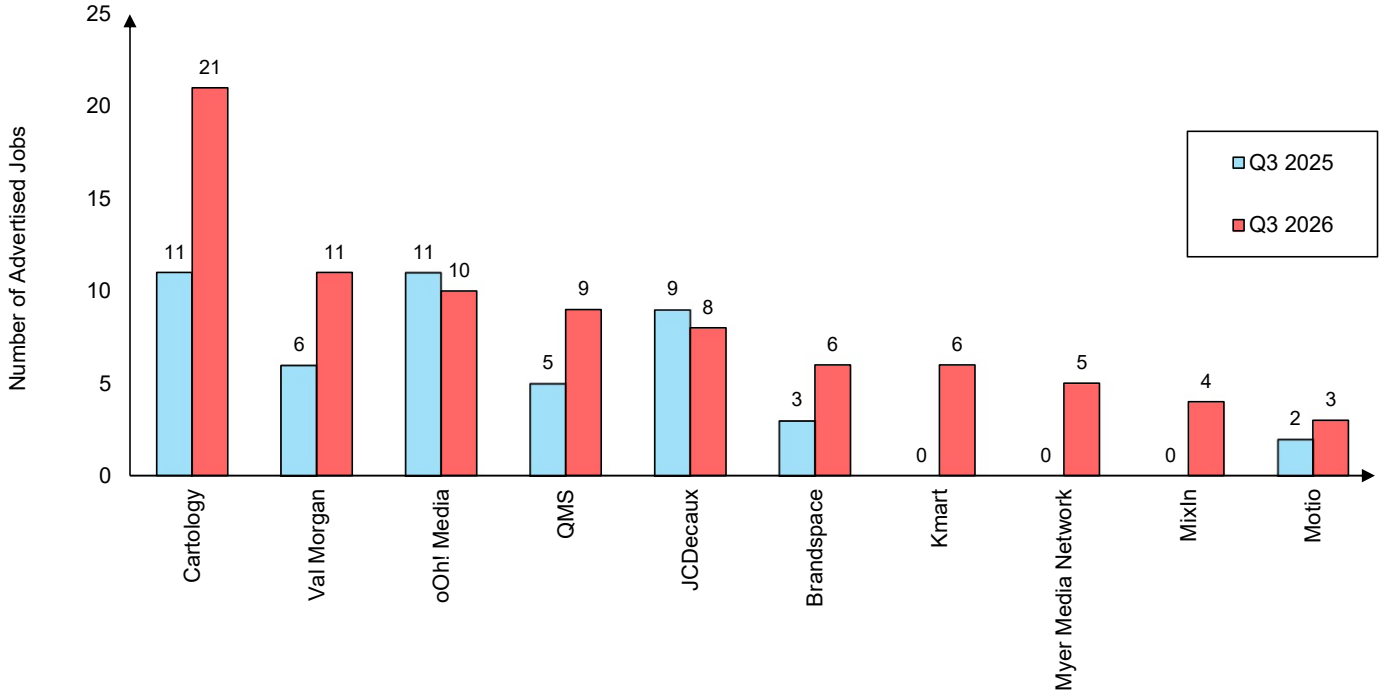


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Top 10 OOH/Retail Media Employers

Q3 2025, 2026

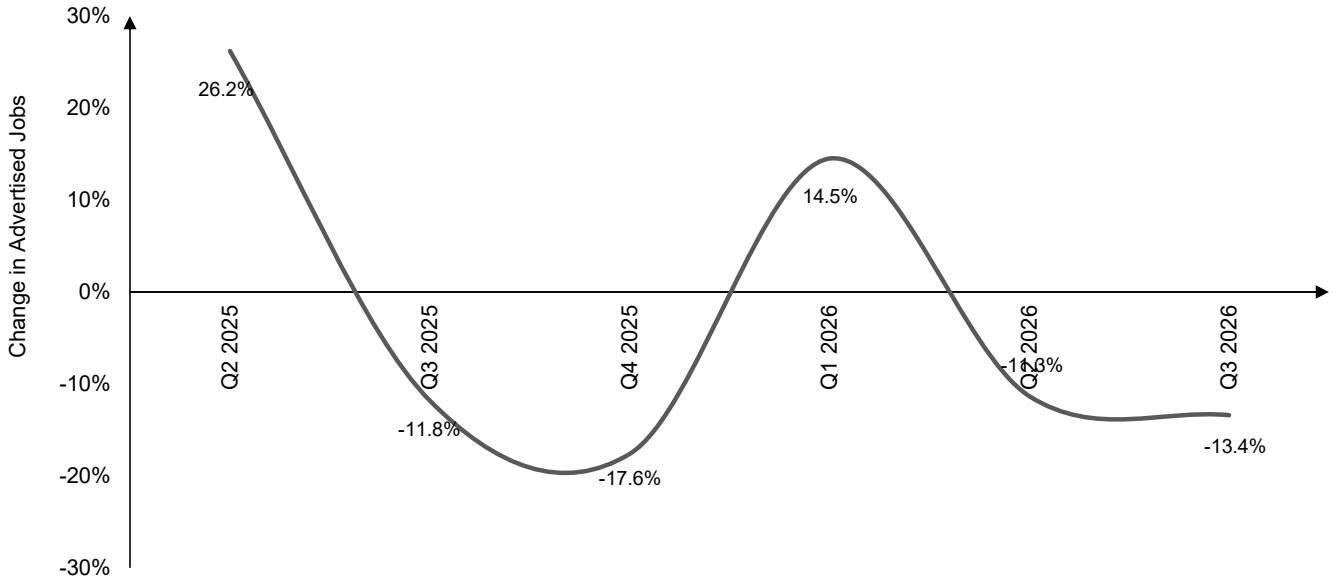


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Search/Social sector, YoY Growth

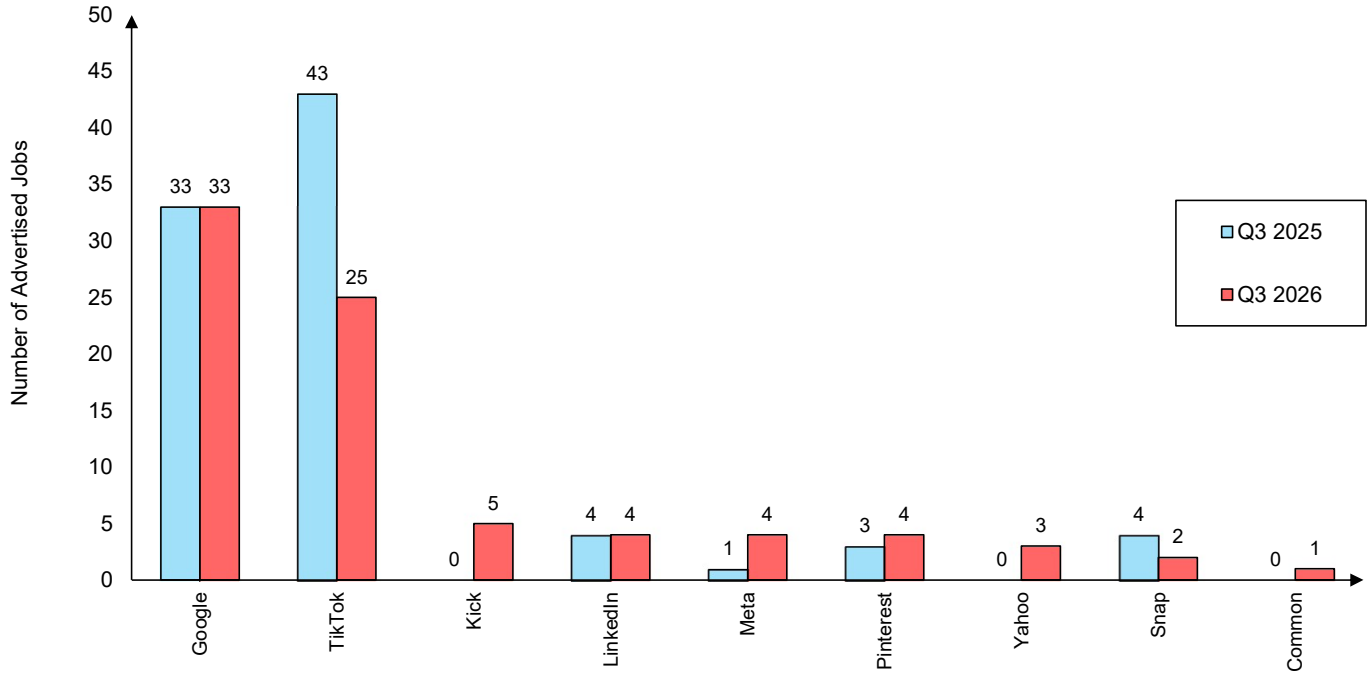


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Top 10 Search/Social Employers

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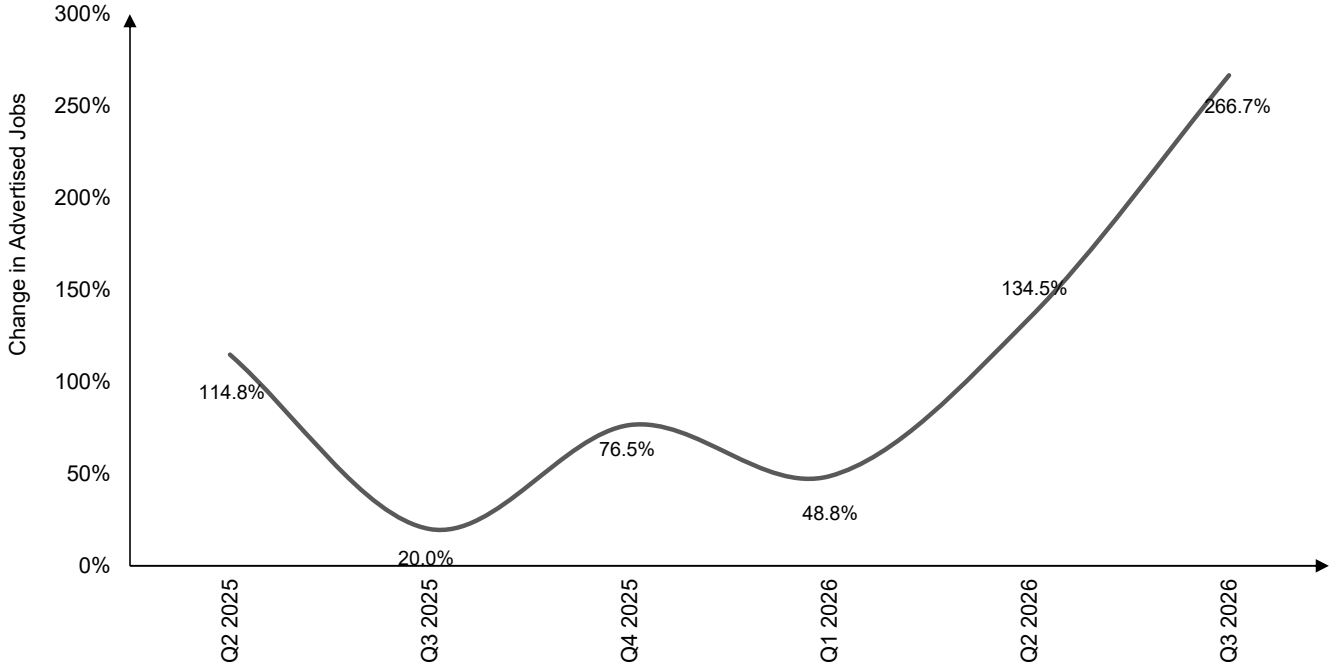


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Large Scale Events sector, YoY Growth

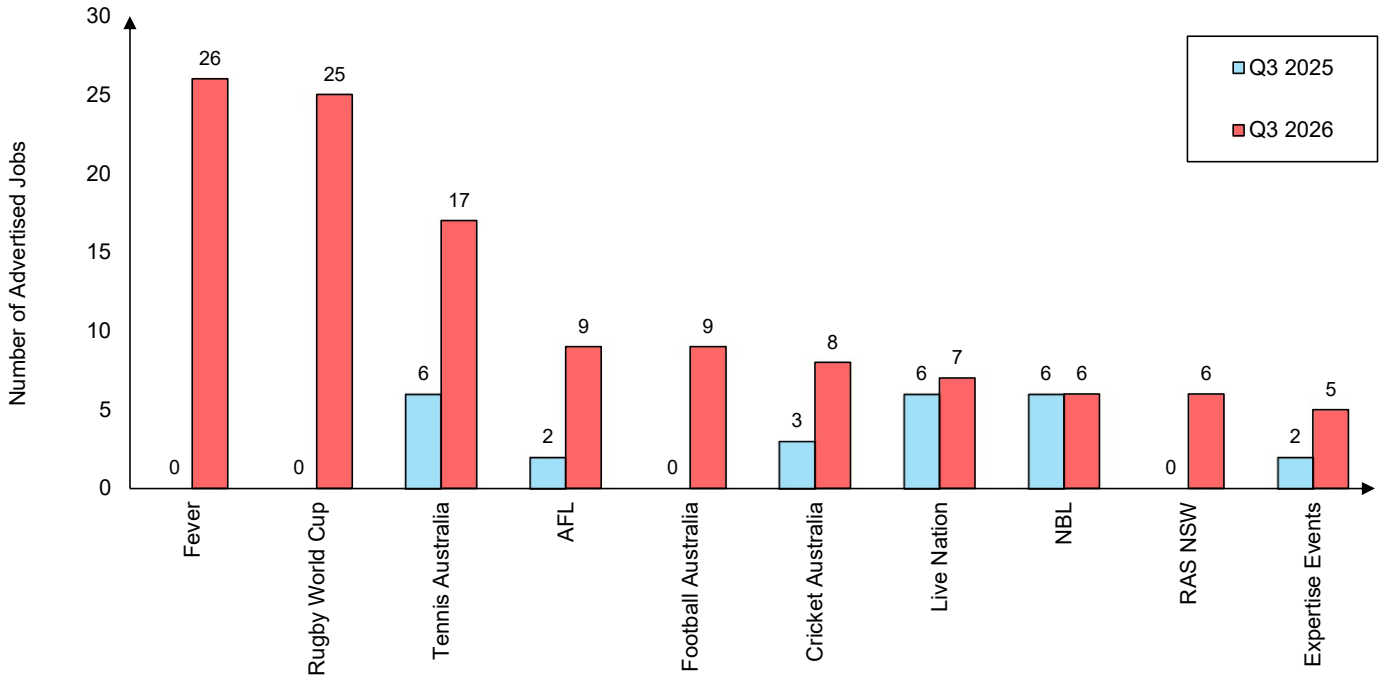


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Top 10 Large Scale Events Employers

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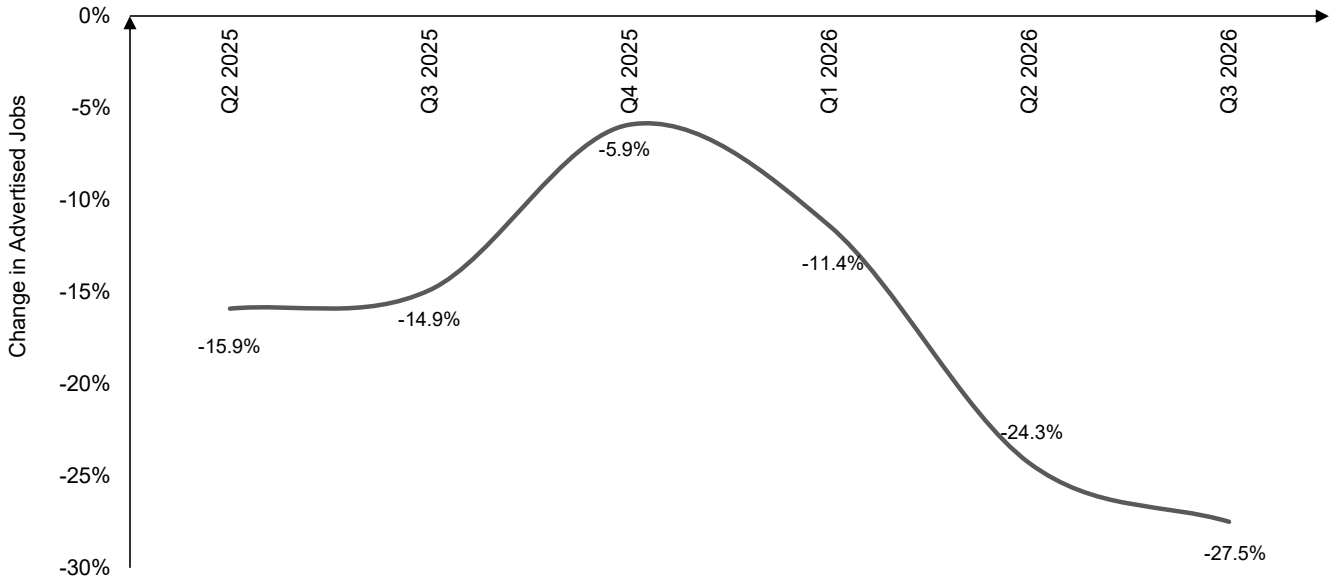


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Programmatic sector, YoY Growth

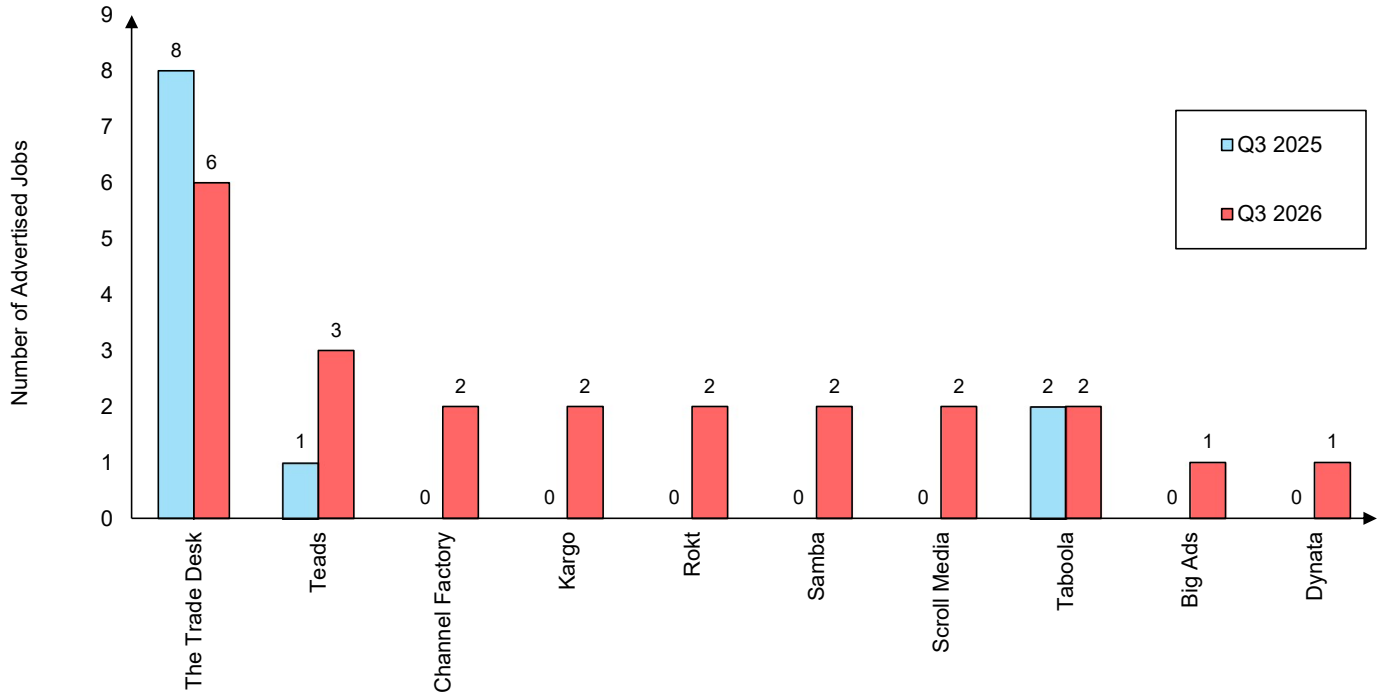


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Top 10 Programmatic Employers

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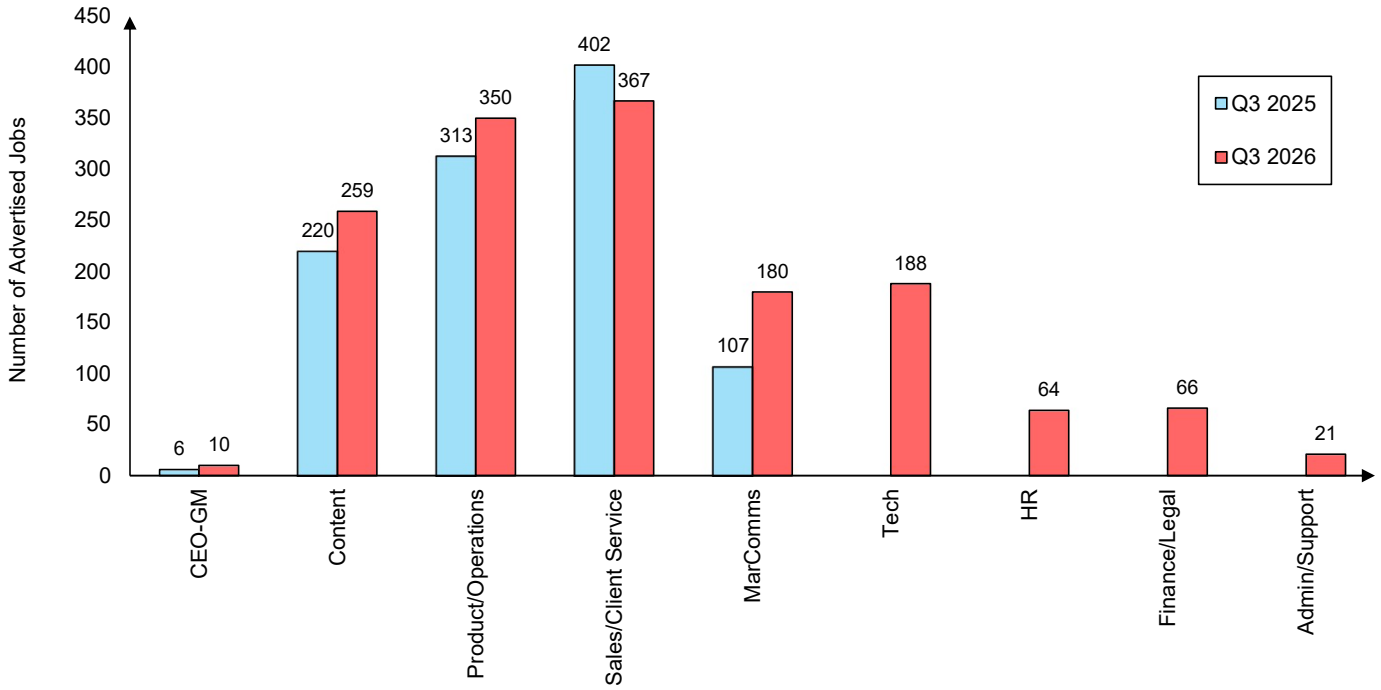
Findings by job function

- **Marketing & communications was the fastest-growing** job function at +68.2% year-on-year. Growth is broad-based, with four of the top eleven hirers (Fever, Domain, TikTok, REA Group) at zero marketing/comms roles in Q3 2025, indicating companies are investing in marketing capability for some time.
- **Content hiring grew 17.7% year-on-year,** the function's strongest result after five consecutive quarters of decline. Growth is concentrated in established newsrooms (News Corp, ABC, Nine and News24). The recovery suggests the media sector is stabilising editorial teams after years of cuts.
- **Product/Operations remains the most consistently positive** core function, growing 11.8% year-on-year for the sixth consecutive quarter of positive growth.
- **Sales/Client Service is in persistent decline,** falling 8.7% year-on-year for the sixth consecutive negative quarter. Traditional publishers and broadcasters (News Corp (-39%), Nine (-25%) and Are Media (-22%)) are pulling back, while Google (+55%) and REA Group (+180%) are growing their sales teams.
- **Tech generated 188 roles in Q3 2026,** second only to Sales/Client Service in volume. TikTok (28), Google (26) and REA Group (22) lead hiring, but the presence of ABC (13), Tennis Australia (7) and NRL (6) confirms technology hiring is embedded across media organisations of all types.
- **HR, Finance/Legal and Admin/Support collectively added** 151 roles in Q3 2026, with News Corp the dominant HR hirer (10 roles). Sports organisations account for a disproportionate share of Finance/Legal hiring.

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Media Industry Hiring Activity

By Job Function, Q3 2025, 2026

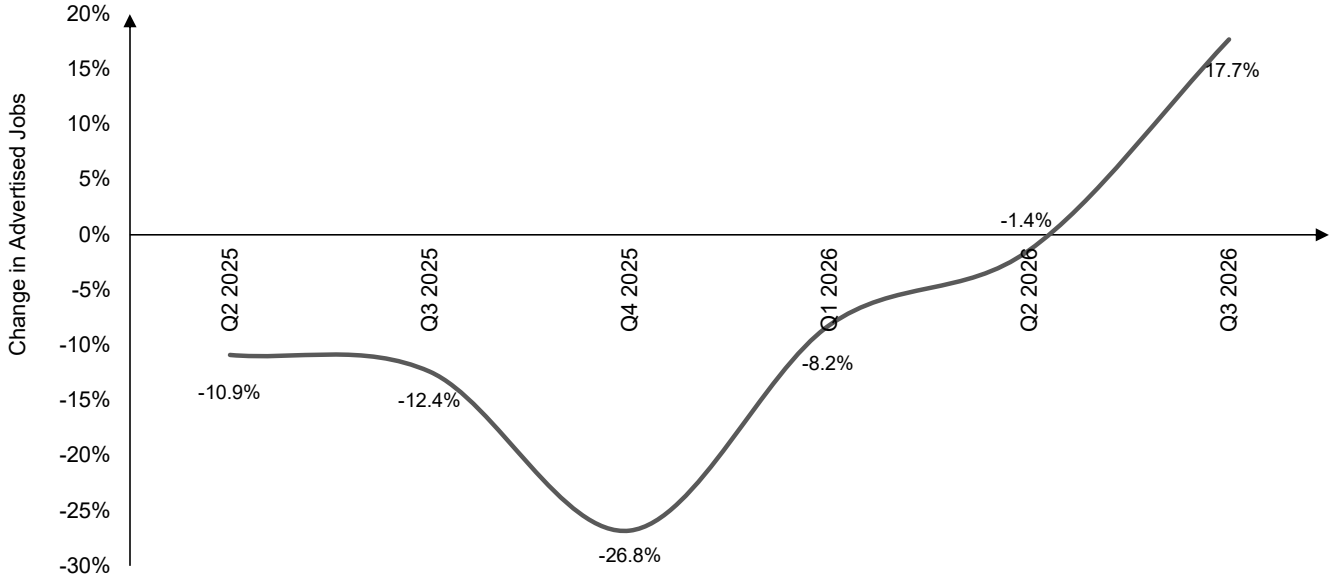


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Content roles, YoY Growth

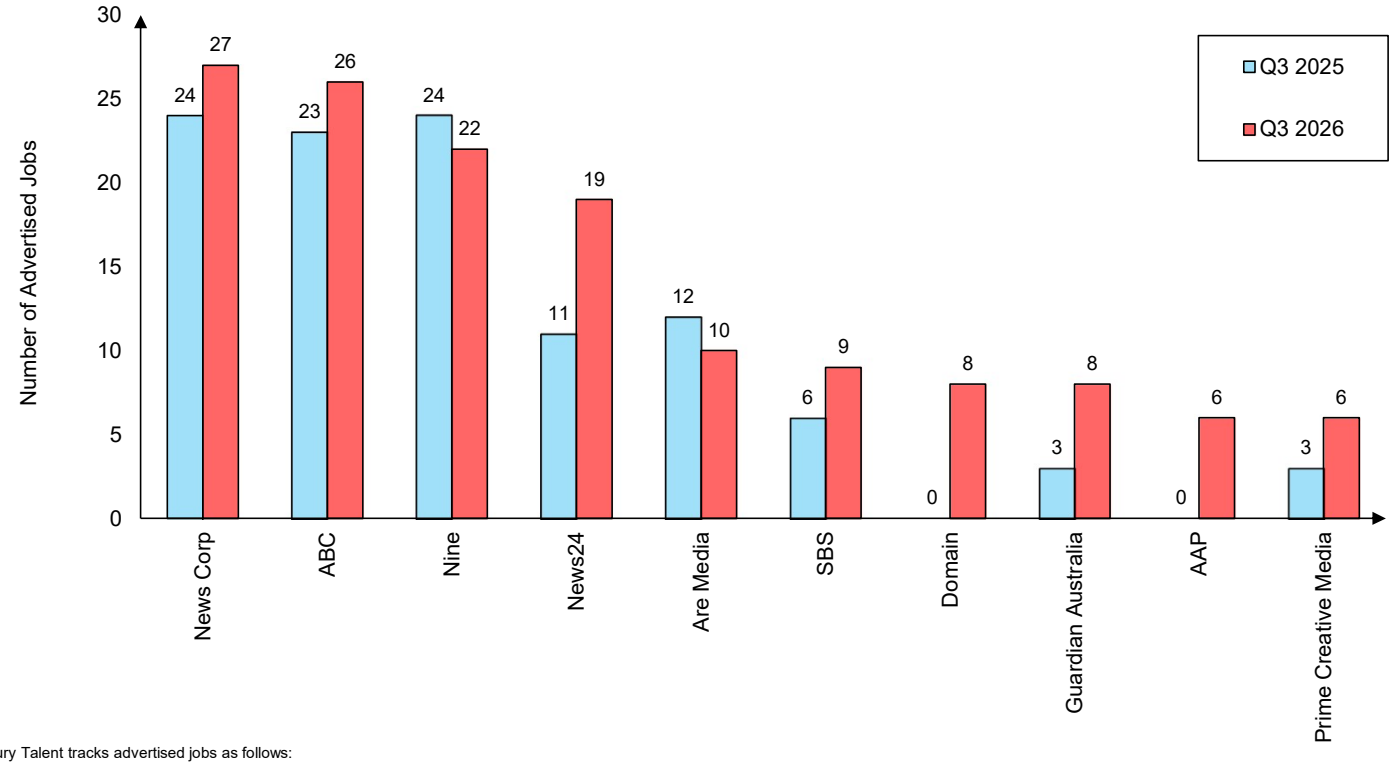


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Top 10 Employers – Content Roles

Q3 2025, 2026

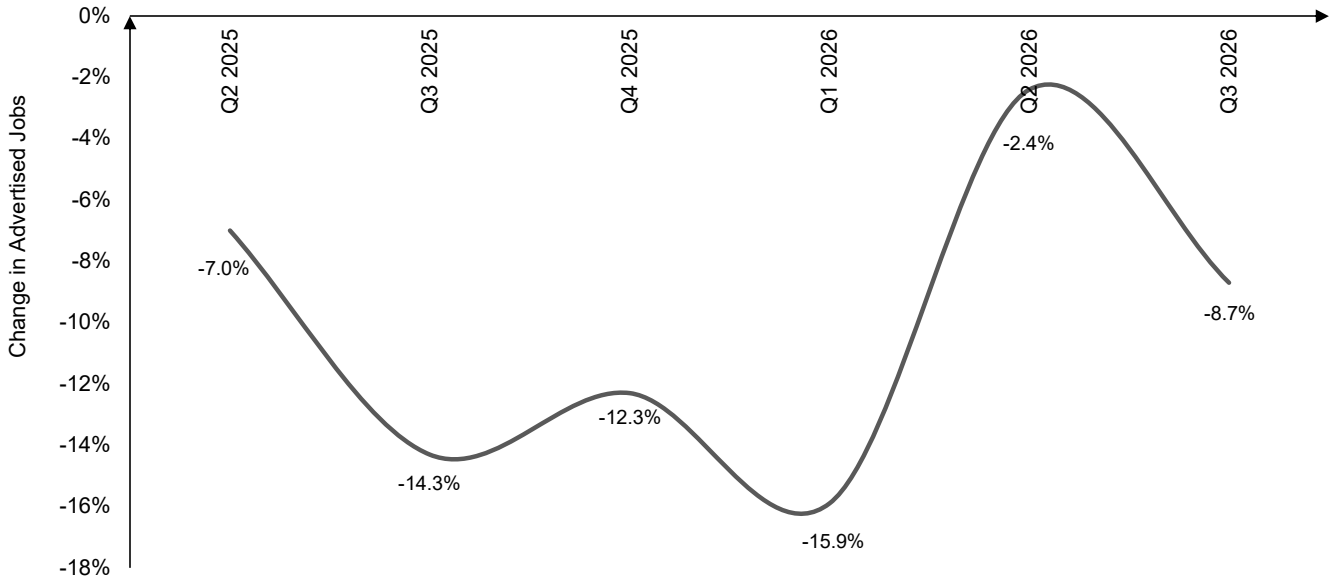


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- Publishers, broadcasters, OOH/retail media, B2B media/events, large scale events, search/social, programmatic, adtech
- All roles and job functions
- Sydney and Melbourne

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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Sales/Client Service roles, YoY Growth

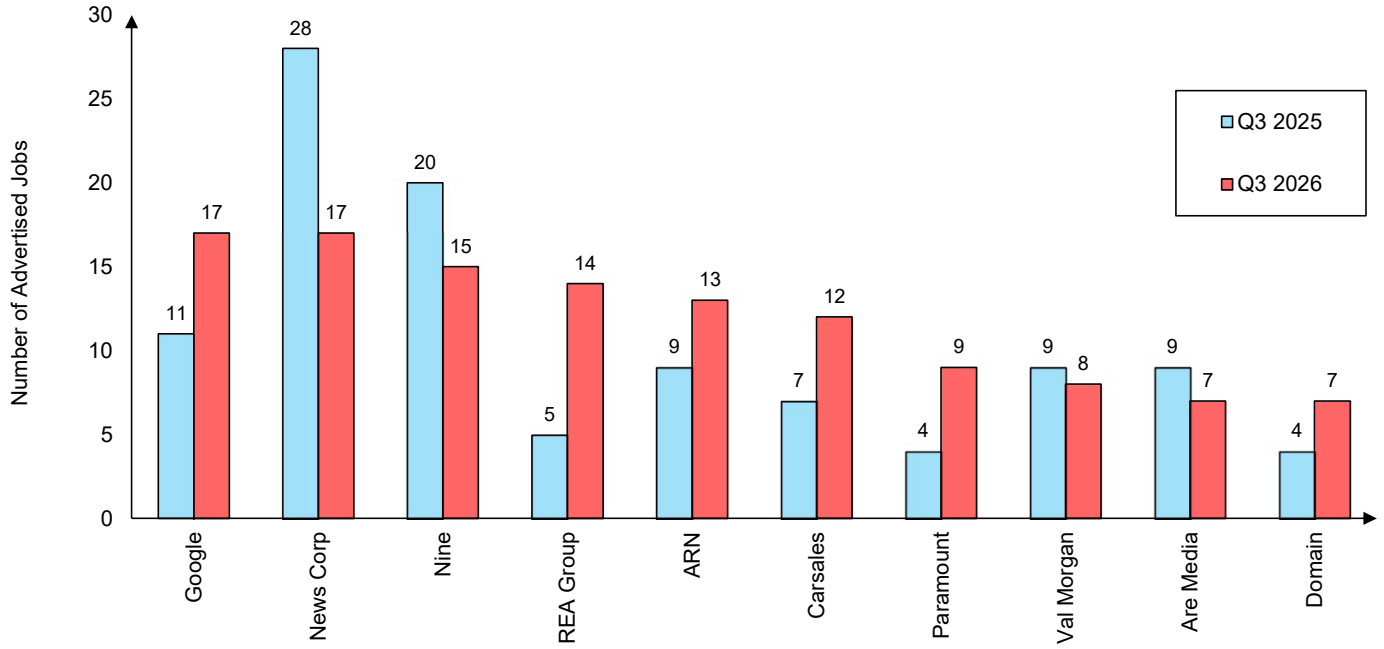


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Top 10 Employers – Sales/Client Service Roles

Q3 2025, 2026

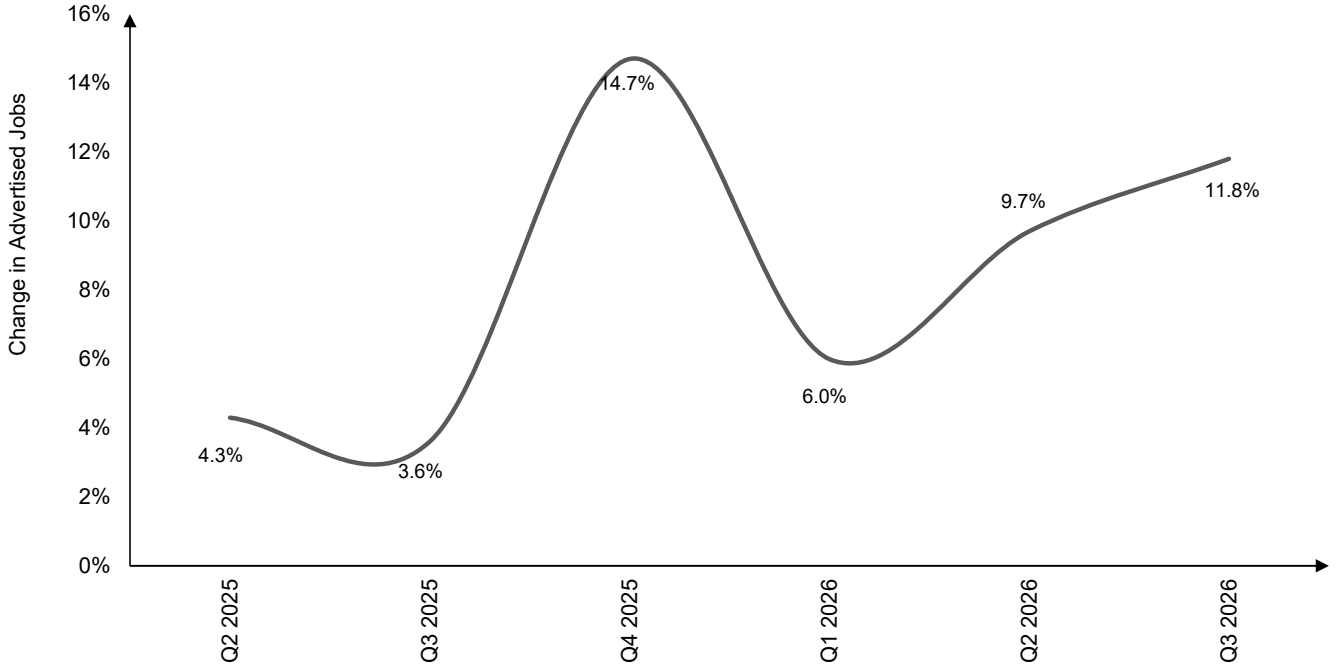


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Product/Operations roles, YoY Growth

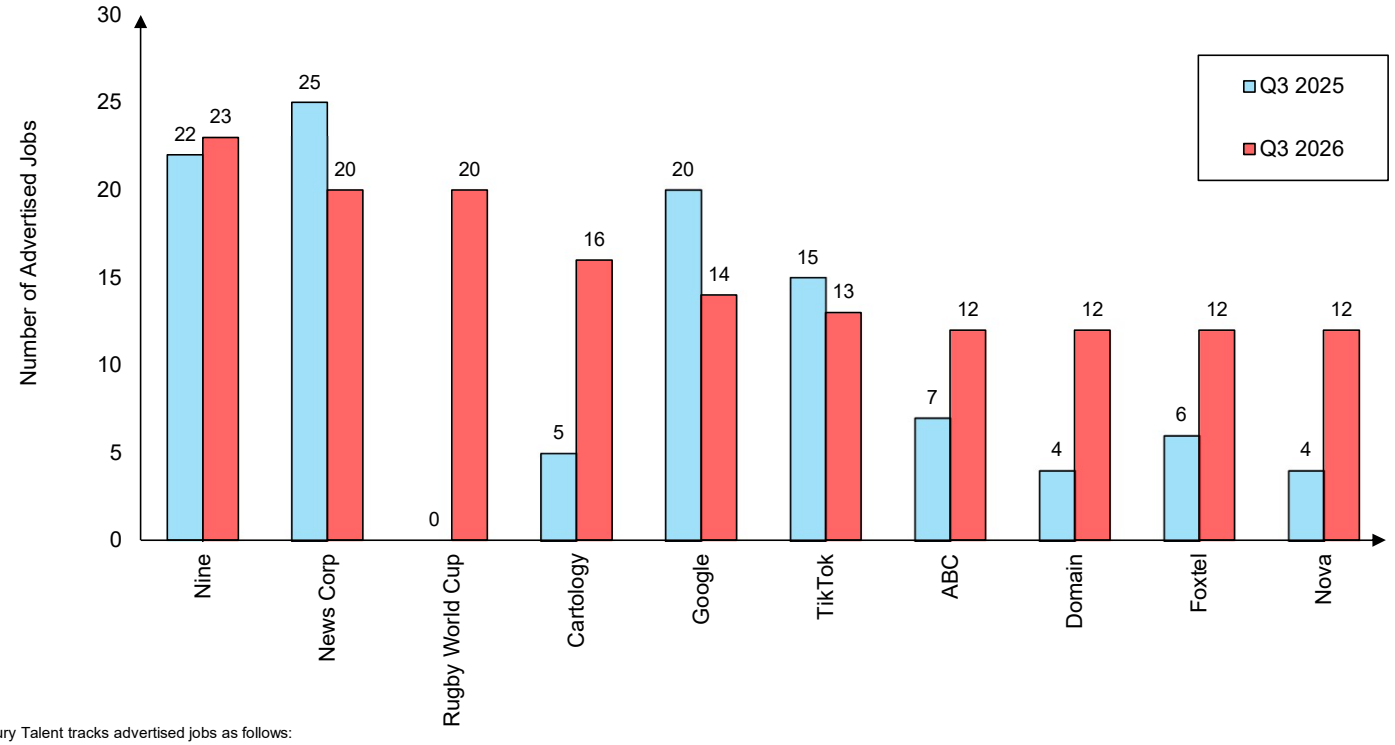


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Top 10 Employers – Product/Ops Roles

Q3 2025, 2026

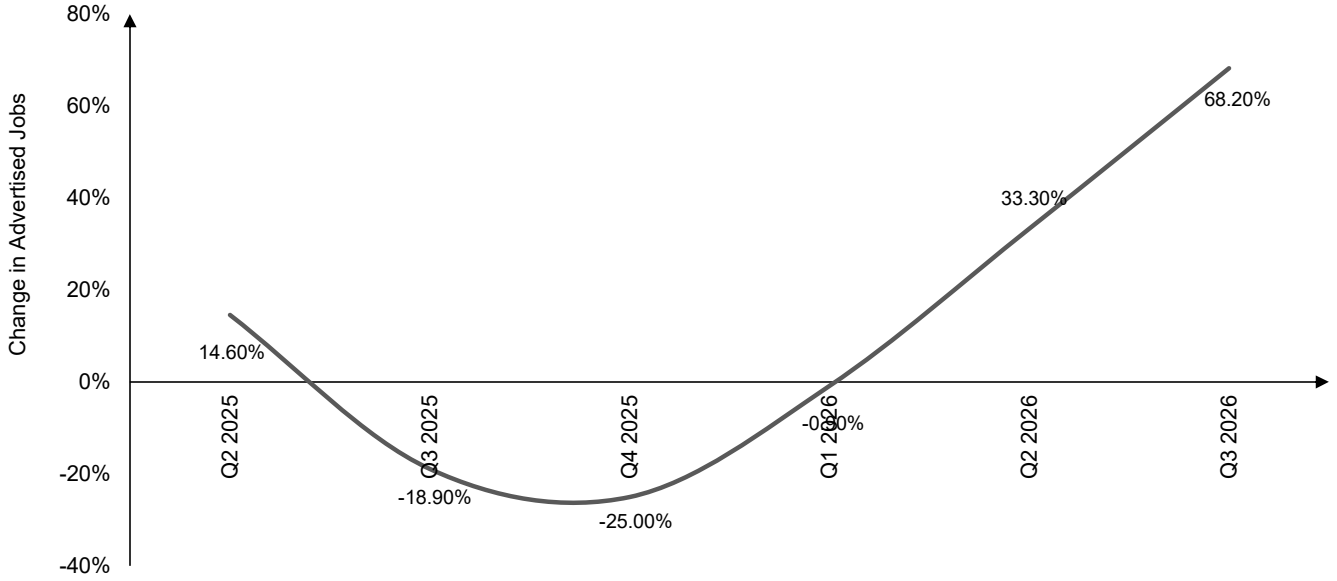


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Marketing/Communications roles, YoY Growth

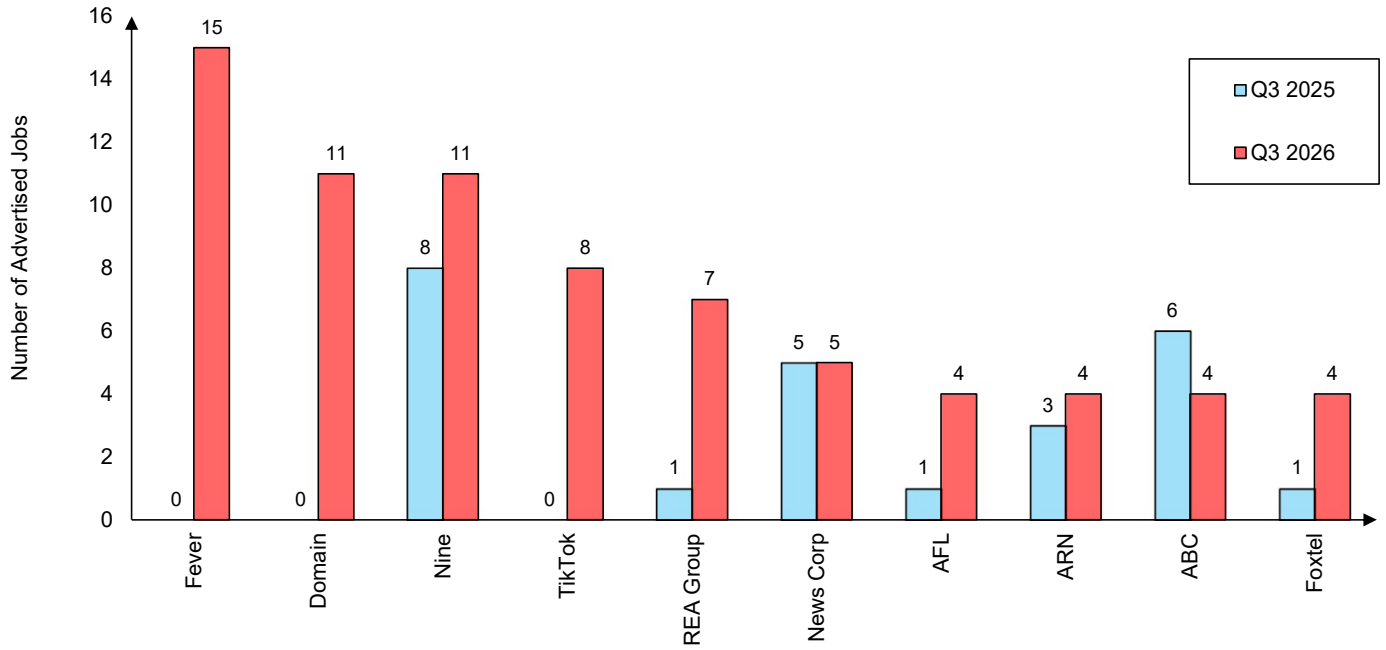


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Top 10 Employers – Marketing / Comms Roles

Q3 2025, 2026

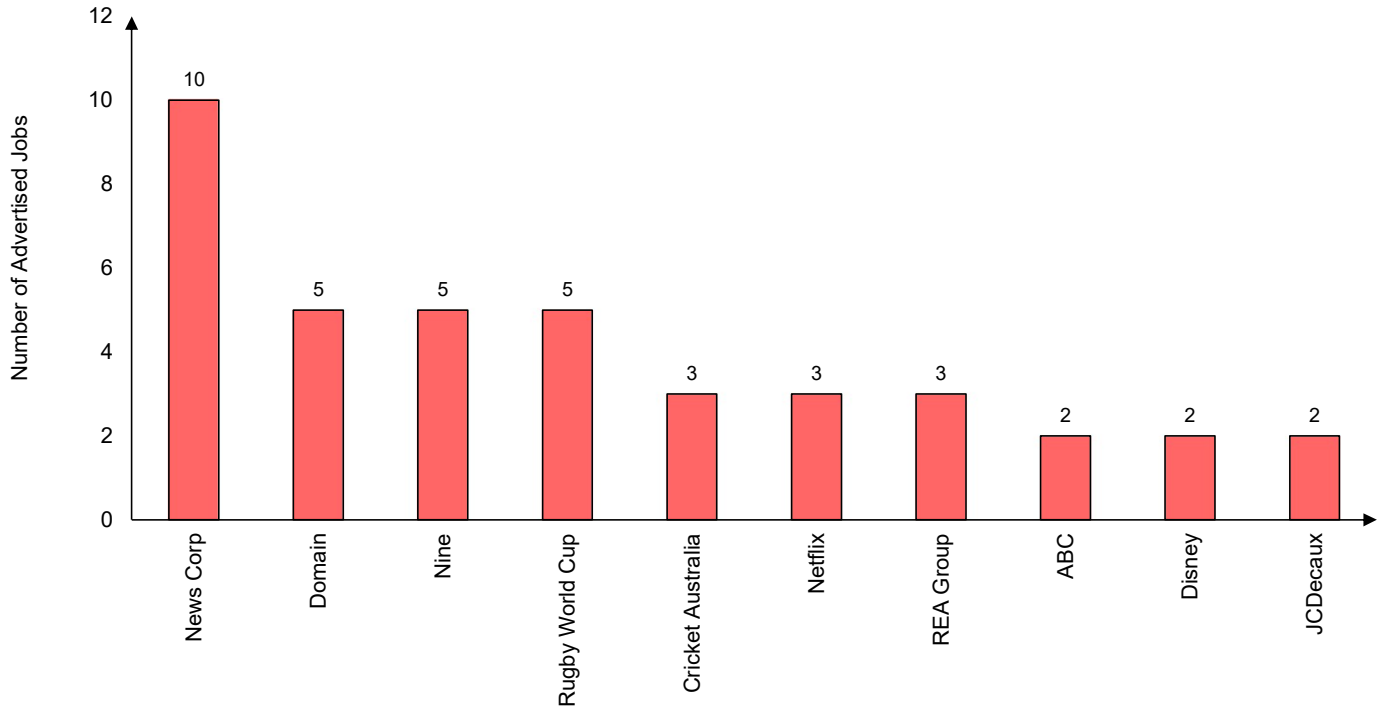


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Top 10 Employers – HR Roles

Q3 2026

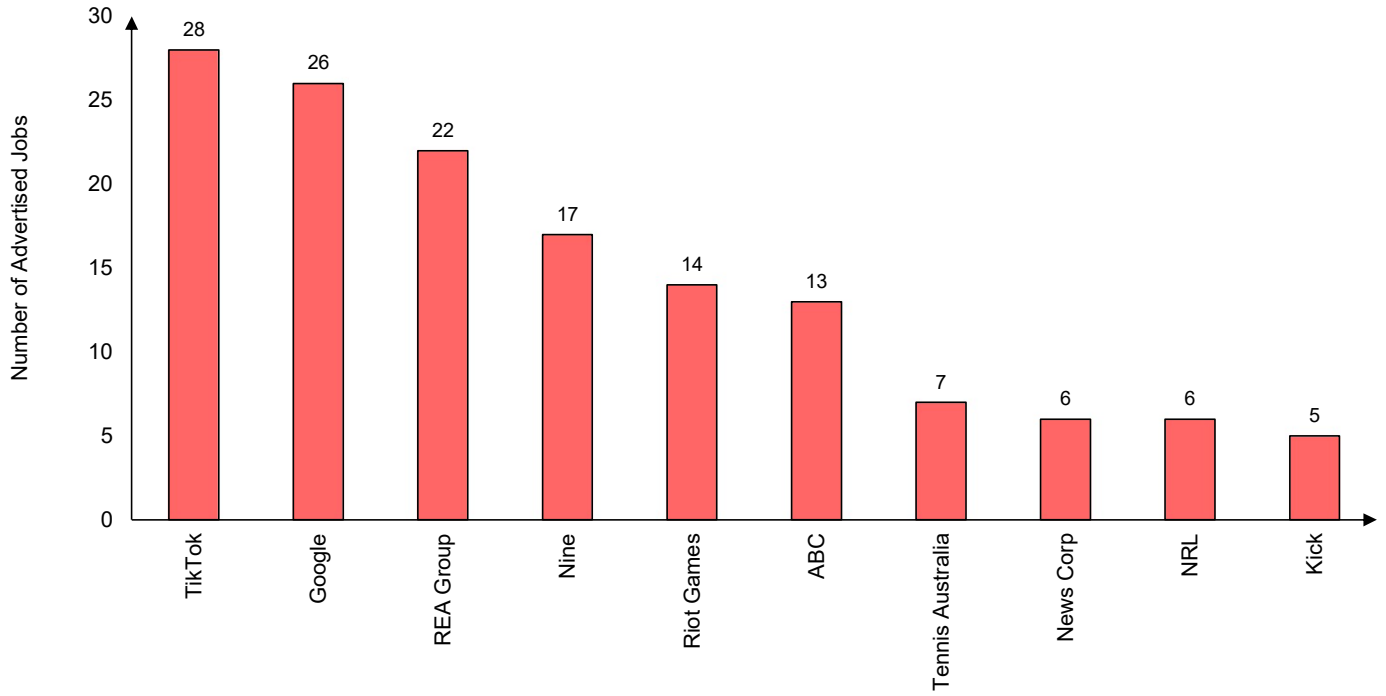


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Top 10 Employers – Tech Roles

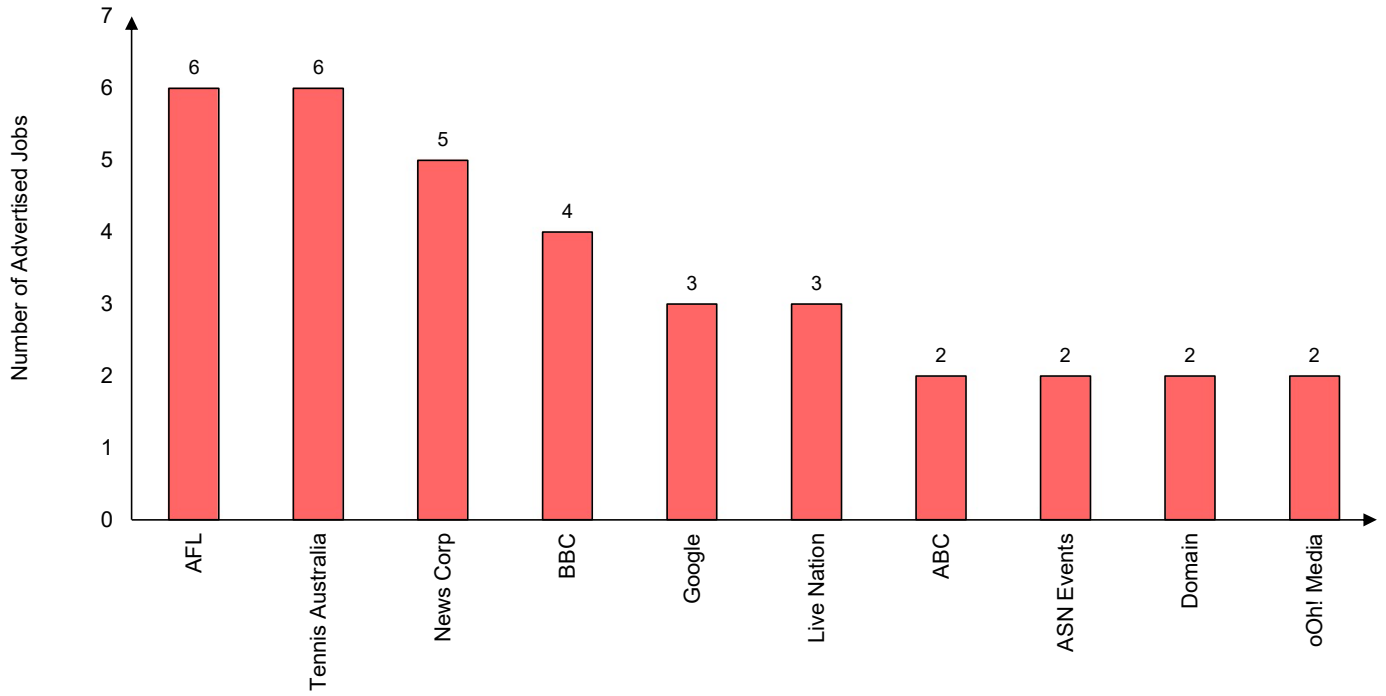
Q3 2026



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Top 10 Employers – Finance/Legal Roles
Q3 2026



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Media & events industry hiring activity – July-September 2026

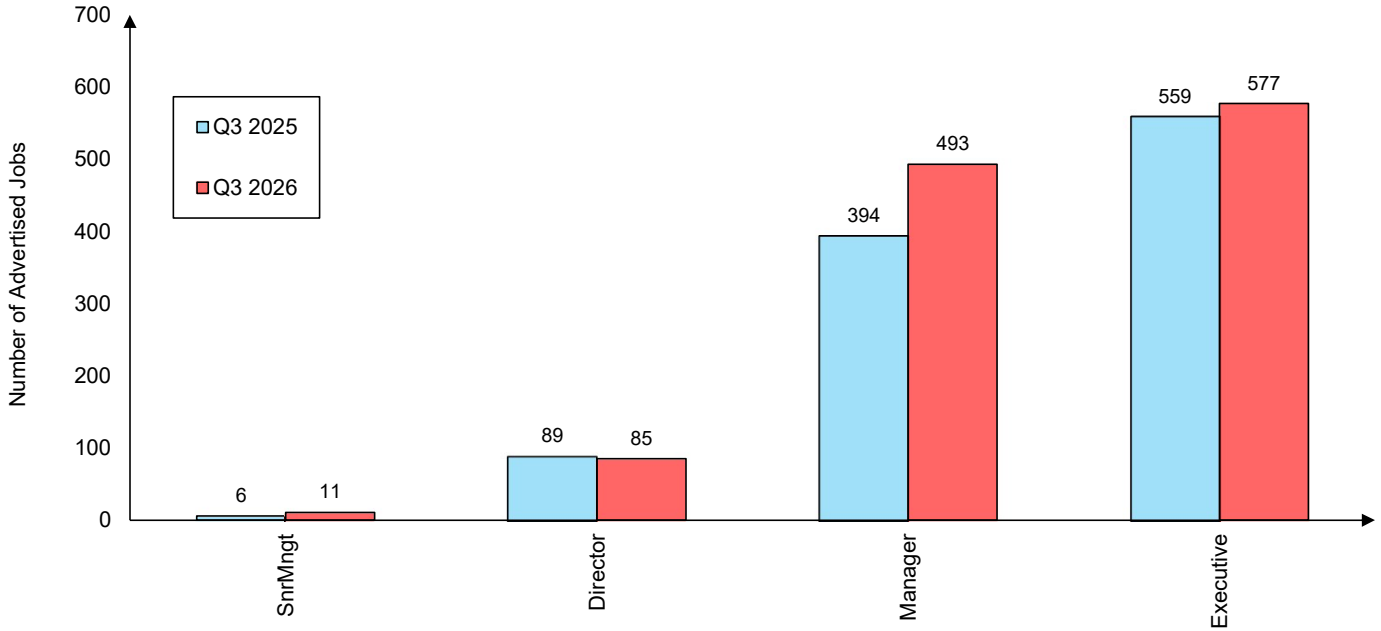
Findings by seniority

- **Manager-level hiring was the seniority story** of the quarter, growing 25.1% year-on-year, the strongest result of any seniority level and the best mid-level result in the dataset. After four quarters of decline, the acceleration could suggest organisations are now rebuilding mid-level teams with confidence.
- **Executive-level roles grew modestly at +3.2% year-on-year**, its second consecutive positive quarter after three periods of decline. While the recovery is real, the pace is significantly slower than mid-level roles, indicating the market is rebuilding from the middle out rather than from the top down.
- **Director-level hiring was in negative territory** in Q3 2026, declining 4.5% year-on-year. Volumes remain modest at 85 roles for the quarter, and the function is highly fragmented.
- **Senior Management roles grew 83.3% year-on-year** to 11 roles, the highest quarterly count in the dataset. However, volumes are small and should be treated with caution. News Corp's two Director-level AI appointments and Nine's Head of AI Product represent the most strategically significant senior hires.
- **The job ad data suggests a recovery in media employment** – mid-level roles now represent 42% of hiring, their highest share on record, while the proportion of junior roles has declined to 49%, suggesting media & events companies are moving into broader workforce rebuilding.
- The seniority data reveals a trend in AI-related hiring trend: early AI roles were almost exclusively junior or mid-level Product roles, but Q3 2026 includes more director-level hires, suggesting AI capability is now being embedded at a strategic leadership level.

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Media Industry Hiring Activity

By Seniority, Q3 2025, 2026

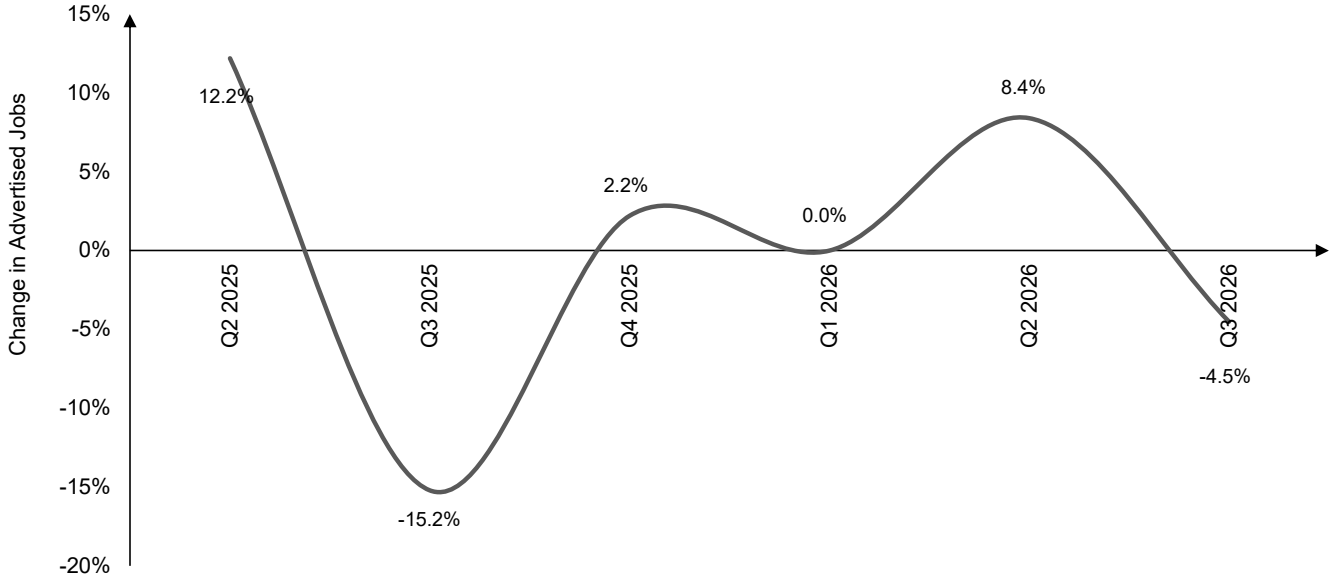


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Director-level roles, YoY Growth

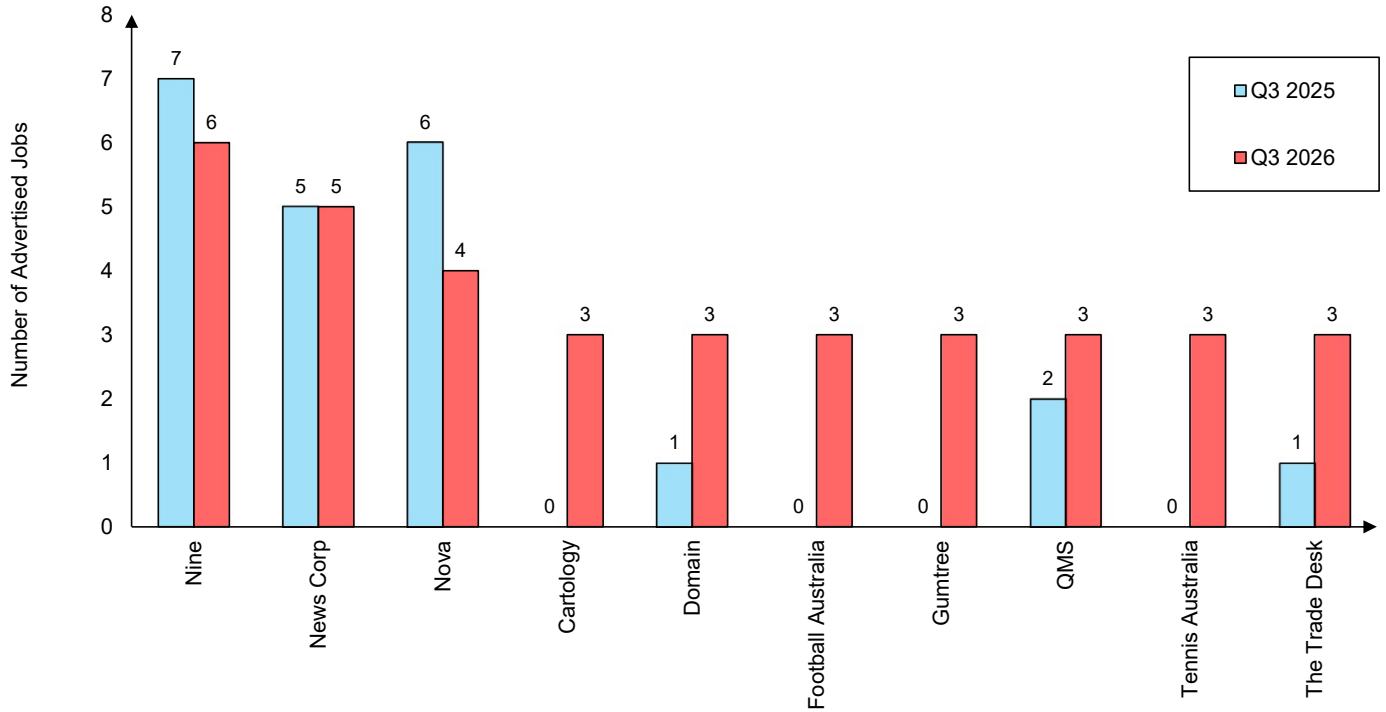


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Top 10 Employers – Director-level Roles

Q3 2025, 2026

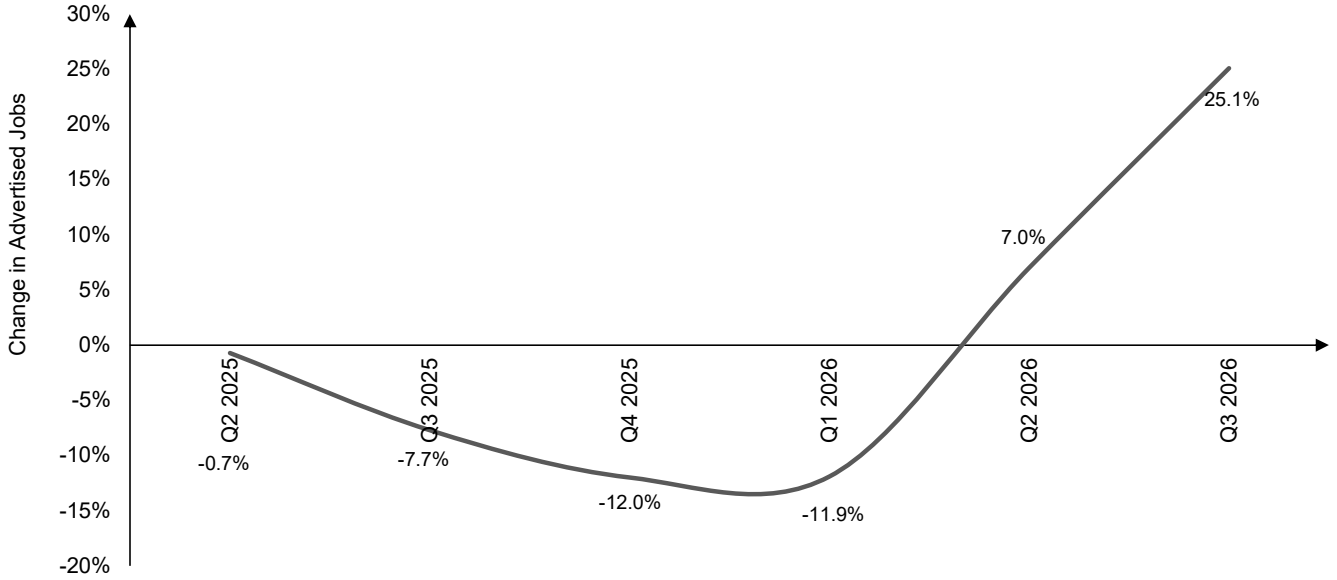


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Manager-level roles, YoY Growth

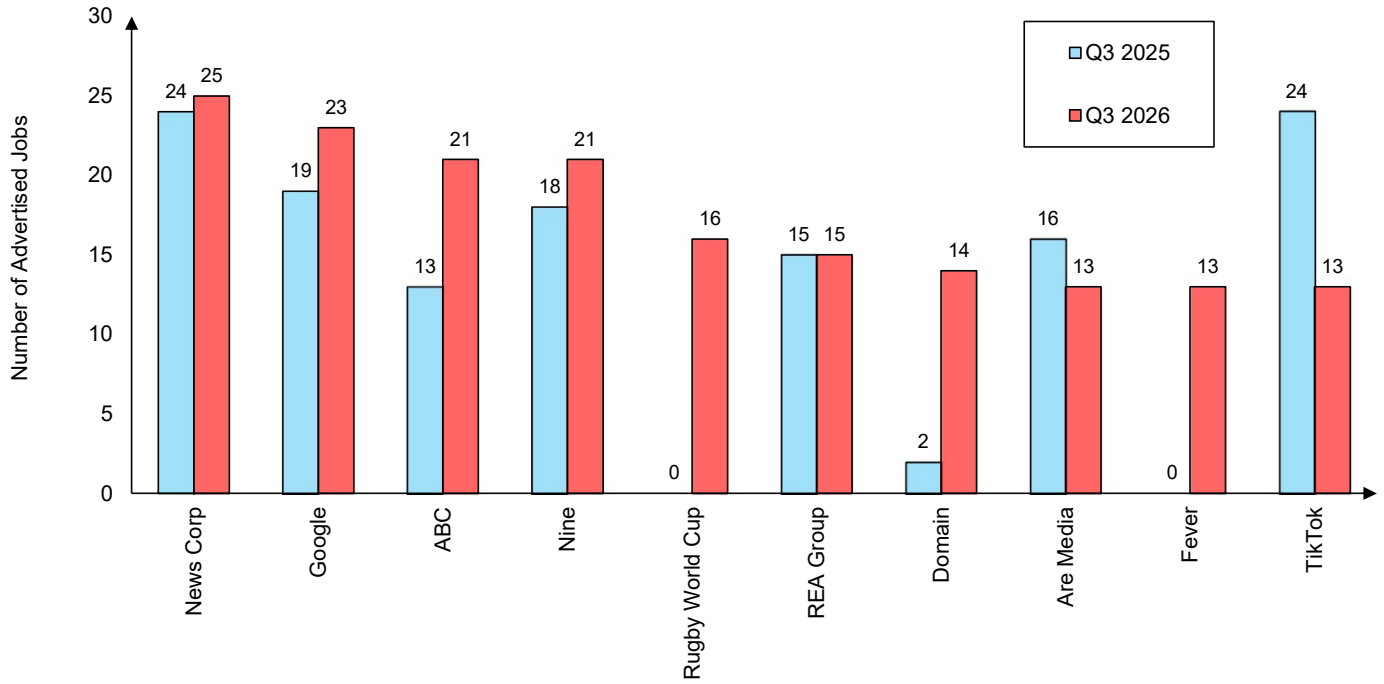


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Top 10 Employers – Manager-level Roles

Q3 2025, 2026

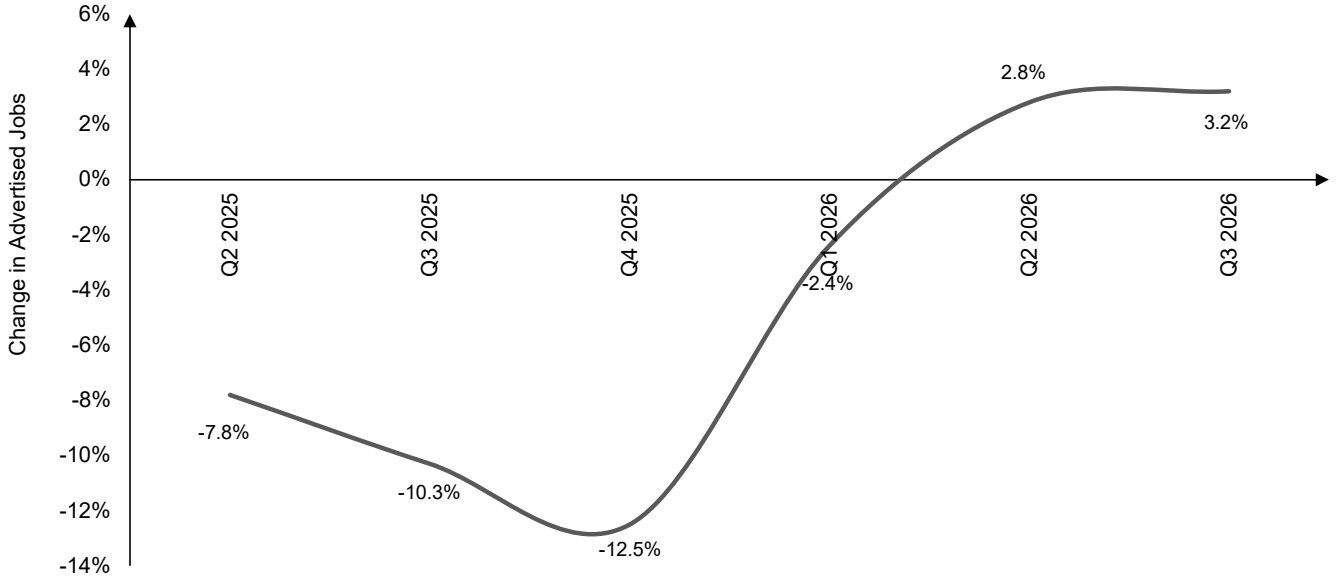


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Media & Events Industry Hiring Activity

Executive-level roles, YoY Growth

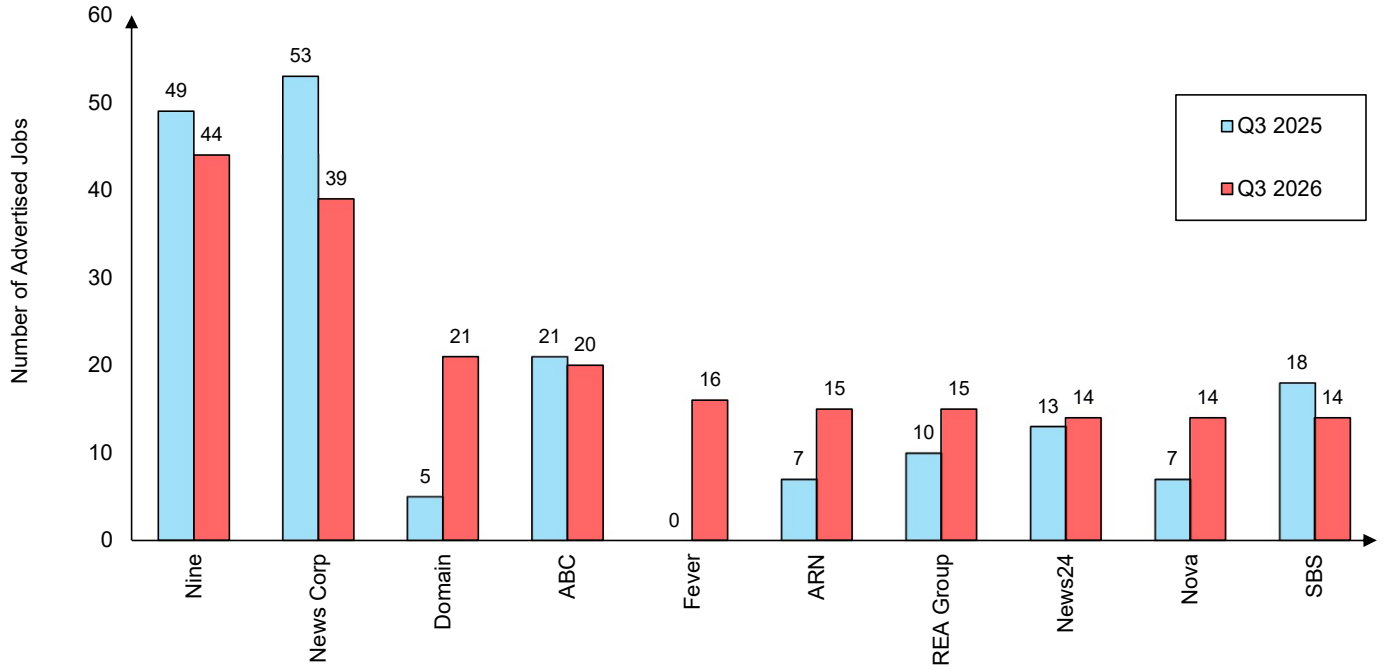


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Top 10 Employers – Executive-level Roles

Q3 2025, 2026



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Methodology

The findings in this report are based on tracking advertised jobs that meet the following criteria:
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Questions and requests for additional analysis should be directed to:

Justin Randles
Director
Mercury Talent
jr@mercury-talent.com

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About Mercury Talent

Mercury Talent is a boutique media & events industry recruitment firm specialising in all roles and job functions in publishers, broadcasters, OOH/retail media, B2B media/events, large scale events, search/social, programmatic and adtech,

The company was founded in July 2023 by media industry veteran, Justin Randles and is dedicated to helping media companies fill their ranks with exceptional talent.

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