The most desired IT specialists

salary, expectations, demands

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Methodology and sources

The goal of surveys conducted by No Fluff Jobs between February and May 2020 was to research the professional situation of experienced employees from the IT sector.

More than 3313 respondents took part in this research – programmers, IT administrators, business analysts, designers, testers and people connected with such areas as project management and online services.

Among all participants, the largest group consisted of specialists with 2 to 5 years of experience in commercial projects (31%) and people with more than 8 years of experience (31%). Intermediate specialists with experience between 2 to 8 years constituted 18% out of all responders. Answers from beginners (20%) weren't the main interest of our research.

Answers collected in the survey enabled us to discover what experienced IT specialists expect in regards to salary, a path of development and promotion for a higher position, and then, allowed us to compare these expectations to conditions offered by employers.

Sources:
Survey research conducted from February to May 2020 – 3313 responders.
Google Analytics – No Fluff Jobs' internal data

How can experienced IT specialists be defined?

Experienced IT specialists have at least 2 years of experience in commercial projects. This group consists mainly of programmers and specialists from such sectors as project management, design & UX, testing, business analysis, IT administration and IT support.

According to statistics that No Fluff Jobs has access to, **men** prevail in this group as they make up **70% of employees in this sector.**

People **between the ages of 25 to 34** apply to job offers with required medium (regular) and senior level of experience. Offers for seniors and experts receive applications from people from the **35–44 age bracket group.**

It is assumed that experienced programmers prefer B2B contracts. However, it seems that preferences depend on gender. **61% of women in IT prefer job contracts**. Whereas, 59% of men in the same group think that **B2B contracts offer better conditions.**

Introduction

Nowadays, IT market values specialists who not only possess hard skills, which means that they have great knowledge about their sector and technologies but also appreciate those who can act and concentrate on providing the best business value of their high-quality services before the deadline.

At No Fluff Jobs, we observed an increase in senior applications of 40% between January and May of 2020. On average, one candidate sent his CV to 4 different employers. This is a new situation on the market, although we cannot yet declare that there is a change in the power structure of the employee market. IT market never abhors a vacuum – even now, candidates who are looking for a new job can quickly find employment. Every third person finds it in less than 2 months after they decide to change their job, and 35% of them are able to sign a new contract after max. 3 months of searching.

The question that pops up in the IT community is "How to distinguish oneself and get a job on favourable conditions?". The conditions in question concern not only the income but also responsibilities linked with the position. Thanks to the ongoing research and analysis, we know that the ability to choose technical solutions focused on company's goals, openness for change and communication skills focused on listening and dialogue are especially important for employers. Everyone who has these skills and proves oneself during a job interview can, without a doubt, find employment.

Tomasz Bujok
CEO No Fluff Jobs

4

the average number
of offers one candidate
applied to in 2nd
quarter of 2020

16

the number of
mid and senior
applications per
one job offer

14%

the percentage increase
in job offers in May
(compared to January 2020)

No Fluff Jobs' internal data

Every other employee with 8 years of experience is a team leader or manager.
Is the promotion in this group inevitable?

Taking into consideration the increasing number of IT employees on the market, it is not surprising that employees of greater experience (a substantially smaller group) hold managerial functions. We need a greater number of managers as the quantity of IT employees increases. However, it is not the only option for senior developers. Organizations need narrowly-specialized professionals. They lead innovative projects: cloud, security, ubiquitous need for micro-maintenance of services, disposal of legacy code etc. Thus, space for architects of technological solutions is created. This is also an attractive path of development and potential promotion. Financially, it is equally beneficial compared to management positions. Therefore, to answer the question: yes, promotion is inevitable, all it takes is the drive and hard work.
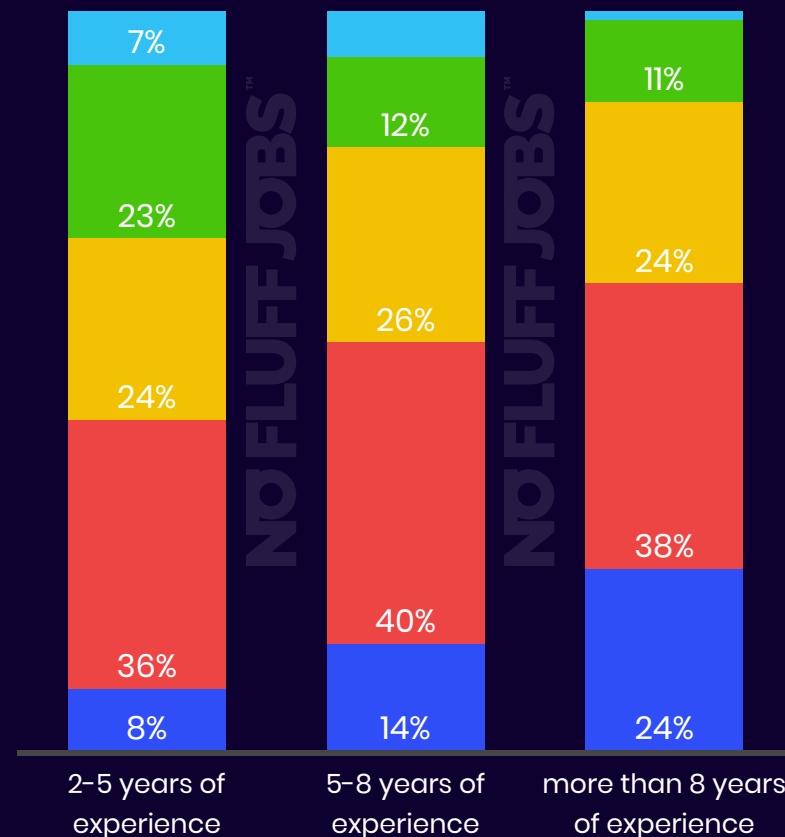
Eliza Stasińska
Director of the IT Department, mBank

Programming since primary school

Programmers with 8 years of experience started their adventure with programming in primary school. It is the generation of today's 30-35 years-olds.

Less experienced colleagues (from 2 to 5 years of experience) had their first encounter with coding when they were between the ages of 16 and 20.

More than 40% of all responders have provided **programming studies** at the university as their source of knowledge. Every fifth respondent admitted that their main source of knowledge is work.

How old were you when you started programming?

	2-5 years of experience	5-8 years of experience	more than 8 years of experience
older than 30	7%		
25-30 years old	23%	12%	11%
21-24 years old	24%	26%	24%
16-20 years old	36%	40%	38%
younger than 15	8%	14%	24%

- younger than 15
- 16-20 years old
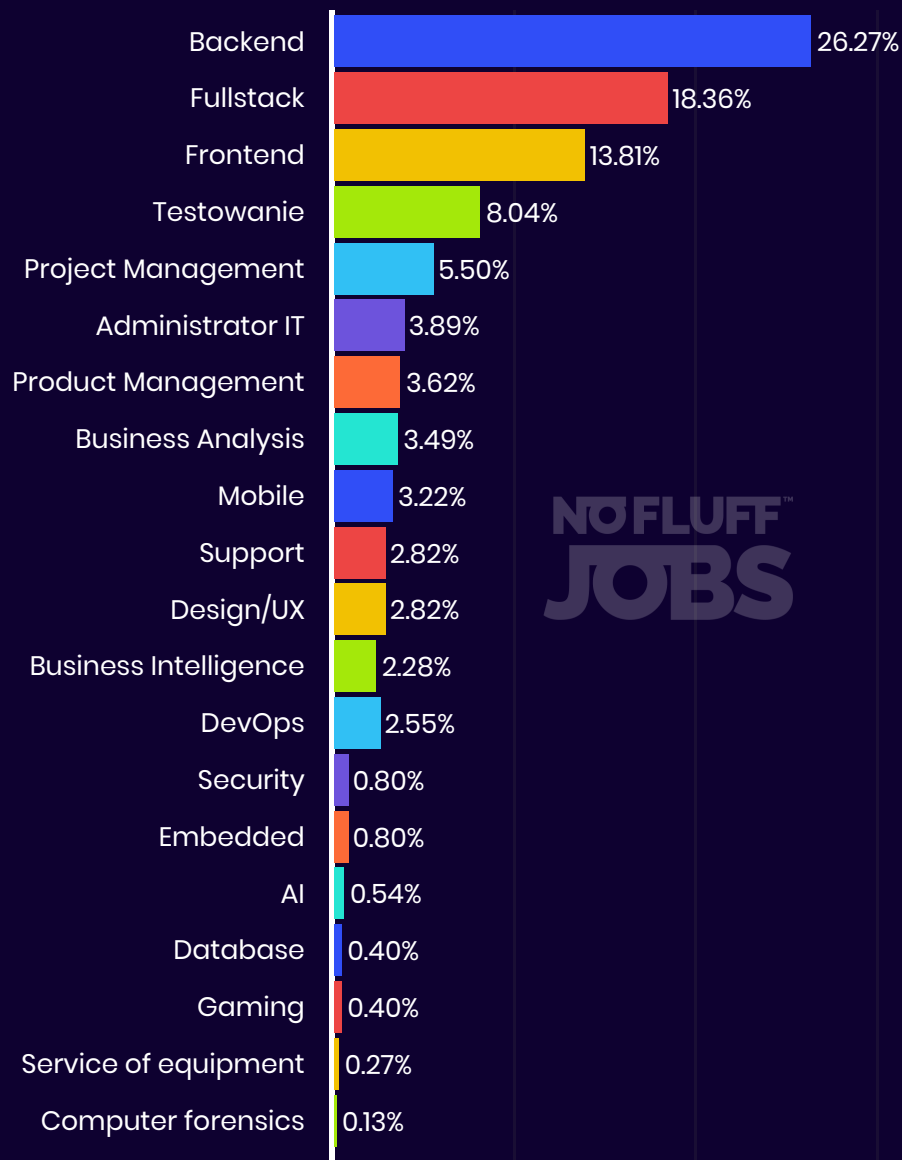- 21-24 years old
- 25-30 years old
- older than 30

Popular specializations

More than **60% of experienced IT employees** work in 4 most recognizable sectors: **Backend, Frontend, Fullstack and Testing.** The largest group consists of employees programming in backend technologies (26%) and those who can create code in backend as well as frontend layer, the so-called fullstack developers (18%).

PLN 11 000

tyle wynoszą średnie deklarowane zarobki netto programistów backendowych (B2B). To zarobki o 10% wyższe od zarobków frontendowców (B2B).

Declared skills and specializations

Specialization	Percentage
Backend	26.27%
Fullstack	18.36%
Frontend	13.81%
Testowanie	8.04%
Project Management	5.50%
Administrator IT	3.89%
Product Management	3.62%
Business Analysis	3.49%
Mobile	3.22%
Support	2.82%
Design/UX	2.82%
Business Intelligence	2.28%
DevOps	2.55%
Security	0.80%
Embedded	0.80%
AI	0.54%
Database	0.40%
Gaming	0.40%
Service of equipment	0.27%
Computer forensics	0.13%

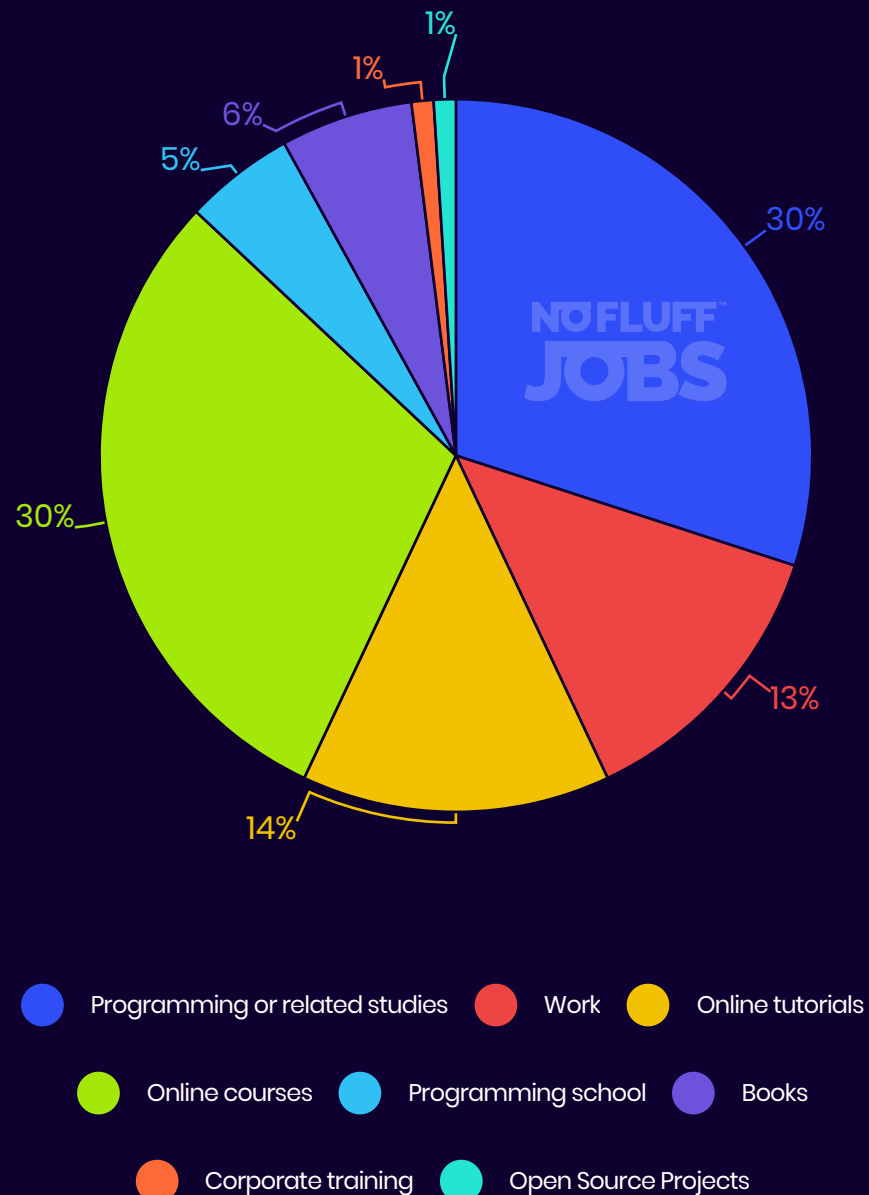# The most valuable sources of knowledge

19% of responders consider their job as the most important source of knowledge

The ability to take part in technical as well as soft competence courses consistent with their path of development is extremely important for employees. The experience gained in action, especially, during writing software for different industries in everchanging conditions and work environment, is valuable as well. At Luxoft Poland, IT specialists have this opportunity. Less experienced employees gain knowledge by working directly with their more experienced colleagues – thanks to their assistance, they build soft competences and gain additional programming knowledge.

Anna Rdest
Recruitment Director, Luxoft Poland

The most valuable sources of knowledge

- Programming or related studies
- Work
- Online tutorials
- Online courses
- Programming school
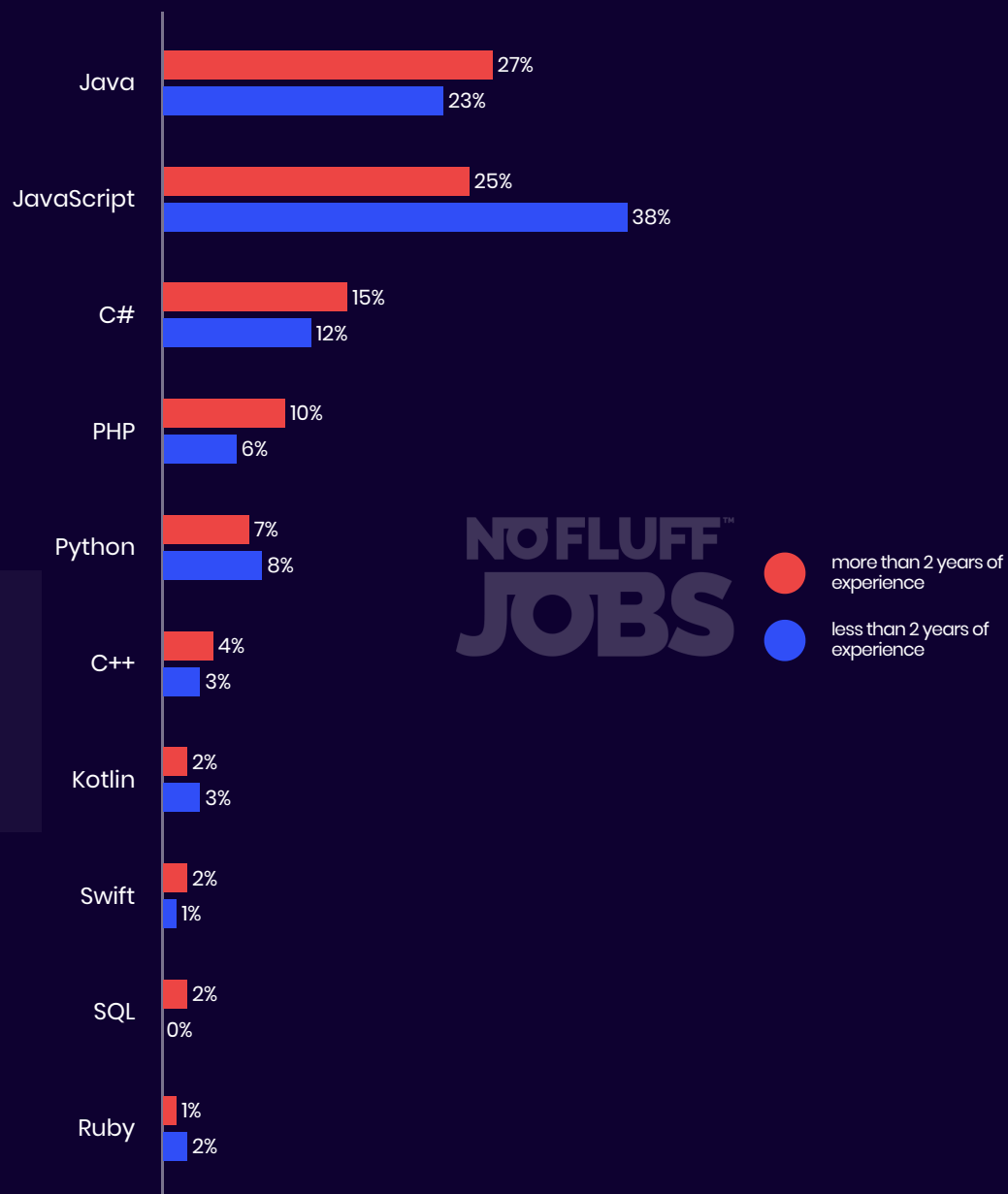- Books
- Corporate training
- Open Source Projects

Knowledge of programming languages

Mid, senior and expert IT specialists know 5 programming languages at average. The most frequently mentioned are **Java, Javascript, Python, PHP, SQL**. People who code for 8 years or more declare knowledge of 6 languages.

Java and JavaScript are mentioned as the main language most often.

40% of responders, who work in backend indicated Java as their main programming language

Knowledge of programming languages

Language	more than 2 years of experience	less than 2 years of experience
Java	27%	23%
JavaScript	25%	38%
C#	15%	12%
PHP	10%	6%
Python	7%	8%
C++	4%	3%
Kotlin	2%	3%
Swift	2%	1%
SQL	2%	0%
Ruby	1%	2%

● more than 2 years of experience
● less than 2 years of experience

Technologies of the future

According to our responders, there will be a higher demand for specialists who know such languages and frameworks as **JavaScript, Python, Java or React**. These projections from seniors are visible in currently published job offers.

As much as JavaScript maintains its high position, there has been a shift in the 2nd quarter of 2020 – **20% increase** in the number of job offers requiring **Java**, and **23% increase** in job offers requiring good knowledge of **React**. Moreover, there has been a higher demand for people who exhibit a good knowledge of Python.

> According to seniors, JavaScript, Python, Java and React will be the technologies of the future.

| Technologies of the future according to IT specialists	The demand for IT specialists in Q2 2020
JavaScript	Java
Python	.NET
Java	Javascript
React.js	Python
Angular/Angular.js	PHP
Node.js	React
TypeScript	Angular
Spring	Selenium
SQL	SQL
C#	C++
React Native	Scala
Vue.js	Node
.NET Core	Ansible
.NET	Ruby
Kotlin	Golang

Expected income

Earnings in IT are dependent on the level, place, size of the company and specialization. On average, **the difference between the declared and desired income amounted to 40%.**

Employees with more than 8 years of experience earn the most. They declare average income of 19,5k PLN (B2B) and 11k PLN net on job contract.

Programmers with more than 2 years of experience, declare income of 11k PLN net on B2B contract and 8k on job contract. The highest income was declared by backend and mobile programmers.

Average net income based on responders declarations

Legend: ● declared salary   ● expected salary
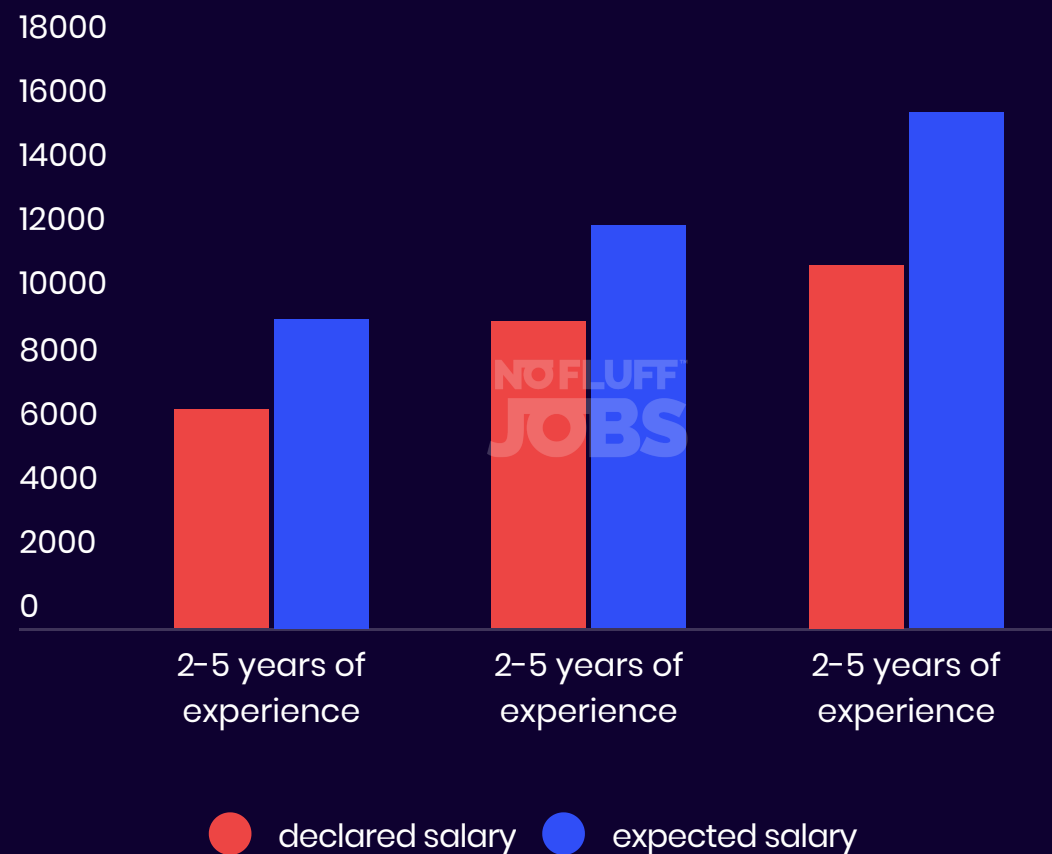
The crisis caused by the pandemic hasn't yet influenced the IT market as much. Indeed, some companies have reduced their IT teams, however, the market has immediately "taken in" the momentary excess. The crisis may deepen and affect more companies. It will probably prove to be better to be loyal to the employer – as they will probably prefer to fire highly-paid B2B contractors rather than long-term employees who know their business and its systems.

The demand for IT competencies will still be huge. Salaries may drop a little, however, unemployment is not something I would expect. The profile of most wanted skills won't change either, as most valuable competencies will be connected with megatrends: cloud, containerization, DevOps, machine learning. The popularity of specific programming languages or technologies won't change as well.

Michał Plechawski
Managing Director of IT, mBank

63%

of all surveyed IT employees were promoted in the last few years.

Seniors become managers

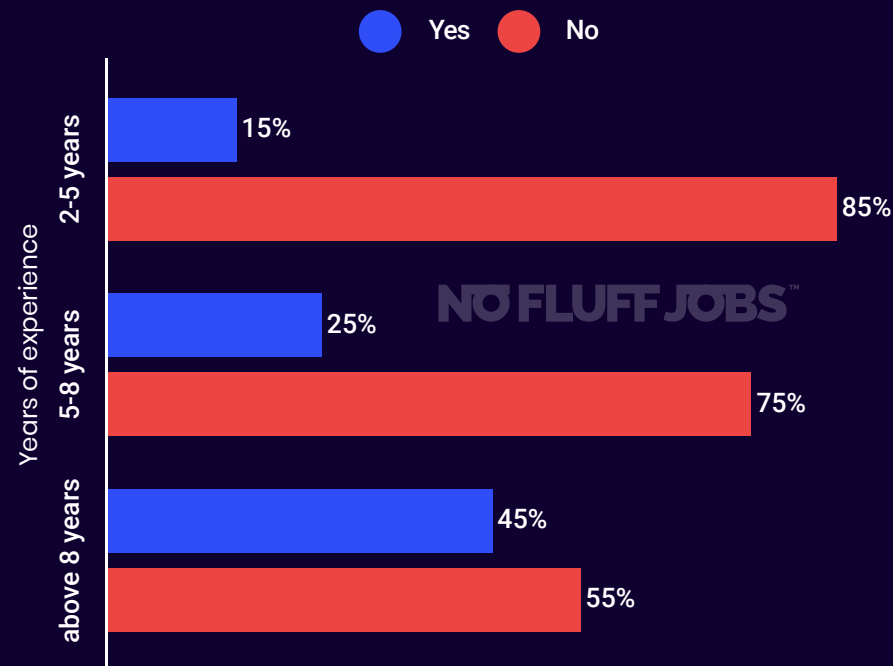**Every other respondent with more than 8 years of experience has been a team leader or manager.** Those, who started their careers as programmers, can boast the largest number of known frameworks and programming languages. This group of responders feels qualified to perform their function. The least confident group has 2 to 5 years of experience.

> *Managers who had started in IT can perfectly fit into an efficient methodology. Thanks to that, they can more easily devote time to build relations in their teams. Ultimately, a good IT manager always asks questions to make the final product work correctly. Thus, there is a need for a person who knows what's going on.*

Krzysztof Dąbrowski,
Vice-President of IT Operations, mBank

Are you a manager or team leader?

● Yes ● No

Years of experience

2-5 years
- Yes: 15%
- No: 85%

5-8 years
- Yes: 25%
- No: 75%

above 8 years
- Yes: 45%
- No: 55%

56% of all present managers and team leaders were promoted in the process of internal recruitment

I believe in people, who connect their managing competences with in-depth sector know-how. Being a manager is a specific kind of job and tools. If you treat it seriously, you can be a great leader.
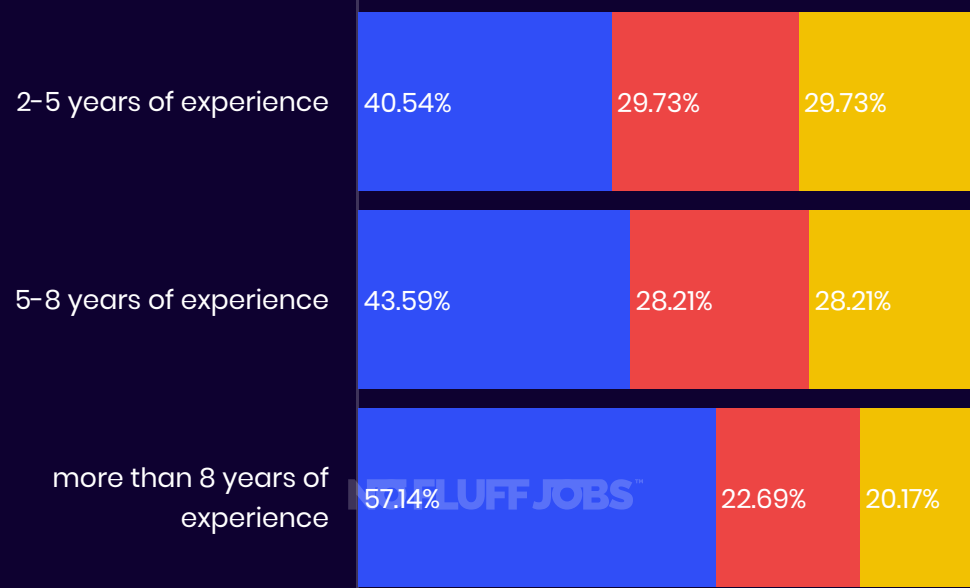
However, in order to really support your team, technical expertise is needed. The area of expertise is the most important aspect of IT, and it makes informatics meritocratic. It is clear to me, and thus I support promotions of highly specialized employees.

Krzysztof Dąbrowski,
Vice-President of IT Operations, mBank

Do you feel prepared to take up a manager position?

● Yes ● No ● Hard to say

|	Yes	No	Hard to say
2-5 years of experience	40.54%	29.73%	29.73%
5-8 years of experience	43.59%	28.21%	28.21%
more than 8 years of experience	57.14%	22.69%	20.17%

56%

of all present managers and team leaders in IT were promoted in the process of internal recruitment

Companies do not invest in the development of managers and team leaders

According to managers and team leaders who took part in the survey, preparatory training courses for their position are very rare. **Only every fifth respondent said that the company attempted to prepare them for a new function.** More than 70% of respondents never had such a possibility.

A group with 5 to 8 years of experience feels mostly satisfied with their promotion. The most doubtful group has less experience. In this group, up to **41% of respondents are not able to say if they are happy with their promotion to a higher position.**

Did the company offer you preparatory training for managerial function?

Hard to say 5%
Yes 22%
No 72%
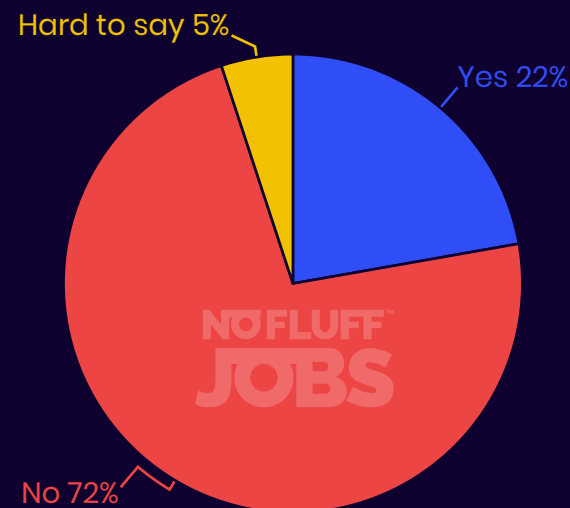
At Luxoft Poland we see it completely differently. We have a full range of management programs supporting employees from lower levels. Firstly, we always conduct a "diagnosis" of the employee we want to promote (we prepare an Assessment Center or Development Center for a candidate), we run succession plans, recently, we also launched a project called Individual Development Plan. We support such employees on every stage of the position change. It is extremely important to us – not only due to competences but also because we want managers taken under our wings to work in accordance with the values of our company.

Piotr Nasarzewski
Recruitment Manager, Luxoft Poland

40%

of responders would like to grow toward managing position

70%

of experienced IT employees value most the possibility of development. They appreciate it more than the amount of remuneration.
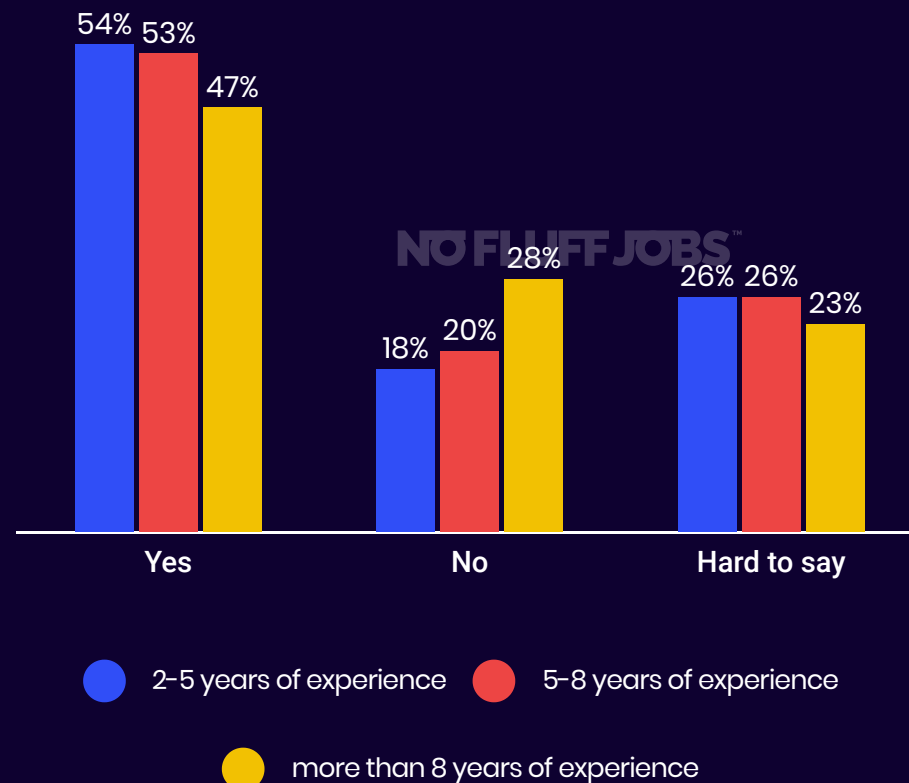
51% of responders think that they would earn more as managers

The vast majority of respondents thinks that they will receive a larger salary as managers. Only a group of 28% of the most experienced thinks that their salary will remain the same.

40% of responders would like to grow toward managerial function, but a similar amount would prefer a more specialized path. 21% doesn't have a grounded opinion.

60% of respondents think, that being a manager is less stable than being a specialist, and in the case of programmers – it means resignation from coding.

Do you think that as a manager you will earn more?

	Yes	No	Hard to say
2-5 years of experience	54%	18%	26%
5-8 years of experience	53%	20%	26%
more than 8 years of experience	47%	28%	23%

● 2-5 years of experience   ● 5-8 years of experience

● more than 8 years of experience

41% of respondents think, that choosing to be a manager will make it harder for them to change jobs. 36% thinks the opposite.

Companies bet on experienced employees

I think that people who were programmers and became managers change their sector as a result. People with whom I work daily and who made this change had already exhibited a talent to lead, good communication skills and empathy. It's not like a good programmer will automatically become a good manager or a leader. It should always be a result of the commitment and a conscious choice. Indeed, knowledge of the market, abilities, technologies – general knowledge of IT helps to work with programmers. However, it is not the key. A good manager, despite understanding what his people do, should also get serious about this new challenge. New managers should develop in a new sector in which they found themselves to be and polish their new craft.

Wojciech Struski
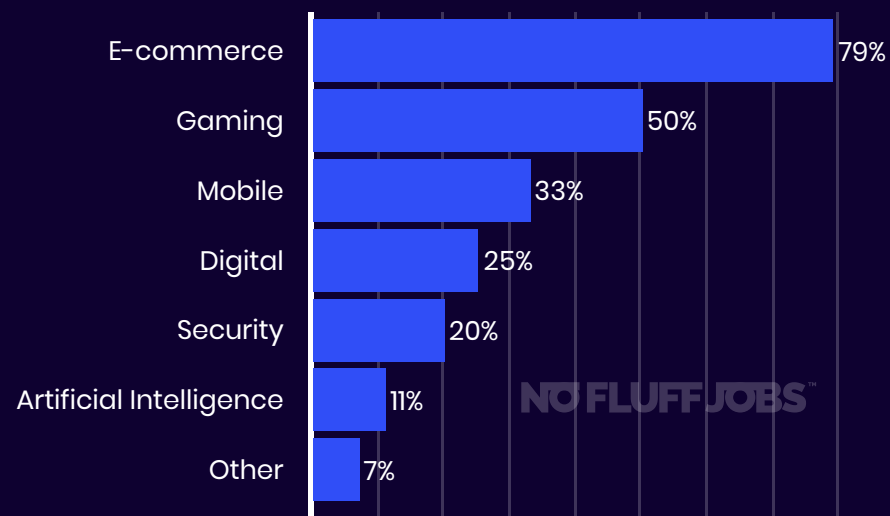Chief IT Architect, Ringier Axel Springer Tech

According to us, most experienced employees prove themselves during a crisis, as they've been through other tough situations during their careers. Thus, they are enriched with knowledge, experiences and skills. They quickly adapt to new conditions and environment and can work under time pressure. What's also valuable – they know how to share their knowledge with other younger team members (what they do eagerly). Thanks to such employees, the company goes through a crisis more softly, more consciously and can leave a difficult situation as a stronger being.

Łukasz Macuda
Regional Director, Luxoft Poland

Almost 80% of seniors say that e-commerce profited during the epidemic

According to experienced employees, sectors connected to e-commerce, gaming and mobile were most profitable, which also lines up with the increase in the number of job offers from these sectors. Additionally, responders note that pandemic is a chance for companies which deal with producing software for remote meetings or platform connected with medicine, health and pharmacy (e-health). According to specialists, the crisis also accelerated automatization in companies.

Which sectors, in your opinion, did profit because of the pandemic?

Sector	%
E-commerce	79%
Gaming	50%
Mobile	33%
Digital	25%
Security	20%
Artificial Intelligence	11%
Other	7%

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In the IT industry, it was always apparent that the way you work and what you can do is more important than the place you work from. For many IT sectors, a remote work mode appeared to be equally effective in relation to maintenance and development of services, as a stationary working mode. Mature employers were even more open to a home office and to this day they allow their employees to choose whether they want to work from office or home.

At the end of the day, it's not important where the team of developers and other cooperating teams worked from, but the quality, adjustment to users' needs and the reliability of the product that was worked on. The high standard will be noted and appreciated in every branch of IT – from e-commerce, fintech, financial and insurance solutions, to tourism and transport.

Marta Stainer
Head of Product & Marketing, No Fluff Jobs

45%

of responders think that epidemic accelerated automatization in companies. 25% stated the opposite, and 30% didn't have an opinion on this matter.

Why it is so important to know the expectations of experienced programmers?

Acknowledging oneself with the candidate's expectations toward employers is one of the key factors. During job interviews, a great number of candidates answer the question "Why are you looking for a new job?" honestly. Most often, The cause is the discrepancy in expectations – after starting a job, it turns out that conditions and responsibilities are different than the ones offered during the recruitment.

Experienced programmer not only knows his area of expertise well but also knows how to navigate it. It is also a very conscious person, who knows that he wants.

How to acquire and keep an experienced employee? The key is to talk about mutual expectations during the recruitment process and to further specify them. There is no space for misunderstandings in regards to conditions and responsibilities in the workplace.

**Katarzyna Faber**
Senior IT Rekruter, Ringier Axel Springer Tech

Conclusion

The group of experienced IT employees is not as homogeneous as juniors. They face different challenges and know their value. Most offers on the market are targeted to them, and they, together with managers and architects, determine and shape technological directions of a lot of companies.

Seniors are people who, very often, achieved stability and have a very clear vision of the future. They aren't looking for a temporary job but for a place that is pleasant to be in, where they can see the ability to grow and which lives up to their precise expectations.

Seniors know technological trends, they can follow them as well as anticipate them. Salary is important to them, however, not as much as the ability to develop their knowledge. They see this possibility in working with specialists from different areas in an international environment. Almost half of them thinks about pursuing managerial paths – the only thing that's stopping them is the fear of losing the possibility to code.

The employees with at least 8 years of experience have the best chance to be promoted for a managerial function. However, they rarely receive proper support in this matter. Luxoft and mBank experts indicate, that long-time employees are not let off during a crisis. They know the company and it's systems best and can work efficiently in tough conditions while matching the business goals of their company.
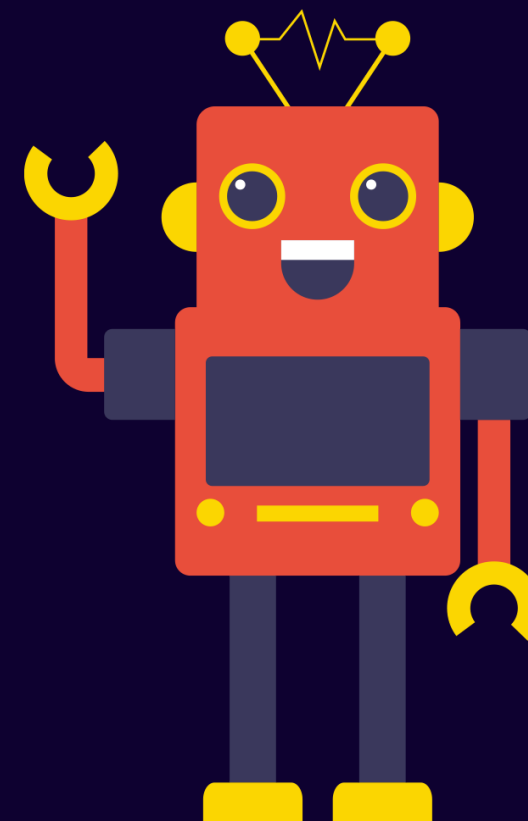
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