

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

# Survey highlights industry staffing crisis

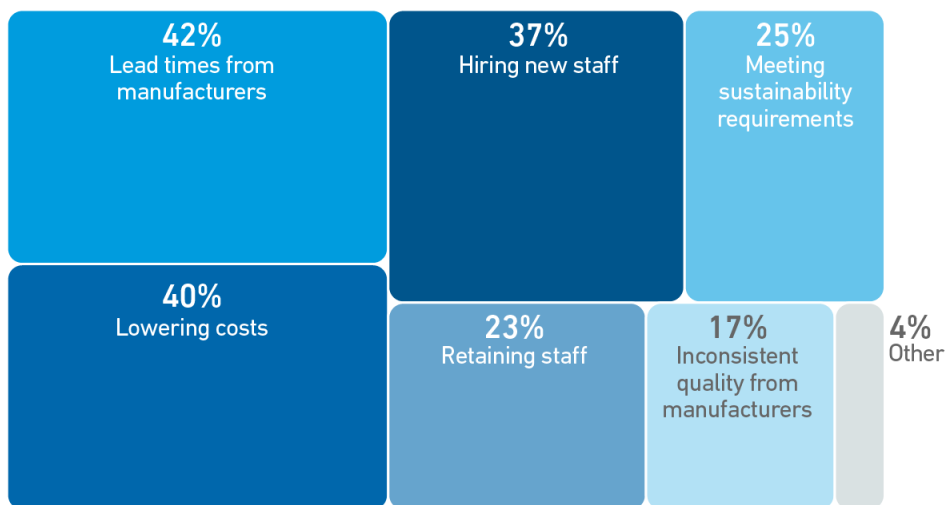


Rose Weinschenk 18 Dec 2025

Staff shortages remain a significant issue for data center companies heading into 2026. Respondents to the Uptime Institute Data Center Staffing and Recruitment Survey 2025 acknowledge that hiring new staff is among their organization's top three challenges, alongside manufacturer lead times and cost reduction. Almost a quarter of survey respondents also name staff retention as their organization's greatest challenge (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1 Hiring new staff is among top challenges for data centers

Which of the following have been your organization's greatest challenges over the past 12 months? Choose no more than two. (n=318)



UPTIME INSTITUTE DATA CENTER STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT SURVEY 2025



While data center staffing issues have persisted for many years, Uptime survey data indicates that efforts to address them have either been limited or unsuccessful. Data center companies often face unique staffing challenges: there is no one-size-fits-all solution. This is especially true when comparing staffing strategies between enterprises and colocation organizations.

# Colos focus on recruitment

In response to recruitment challenges, colocation companies are intensifying efforts to attract and recruit junior employees from universities and high schools: the number of respondents for both these categories is significantly higher in 2025 than in 2024 (**Figure 2**). There are several possible explanations for this, including increased competition from other industries within conventional talent pipelines. A greater focus on hiring recent graduates may also reflect longer-term retention strategies that invest in junior staff, and could partly explain the seven-percentage point increase in colocation companies offering mentorship programs for employees (**Figure 3**).

Figure 2 Colocation companies recruited more students in 2025

For which of the following labor pools has your organization hired the greatest number of new data center employees during the past 12 months? Choose no more than two.

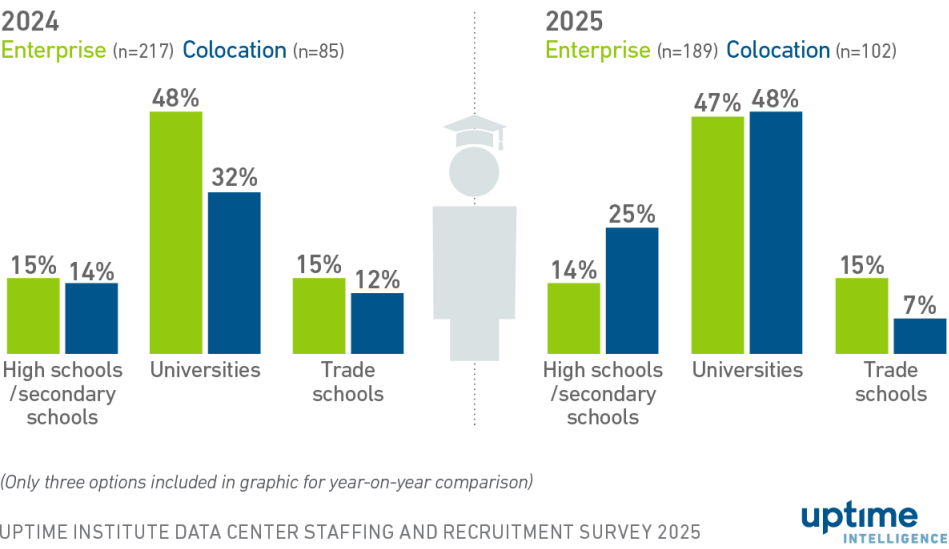
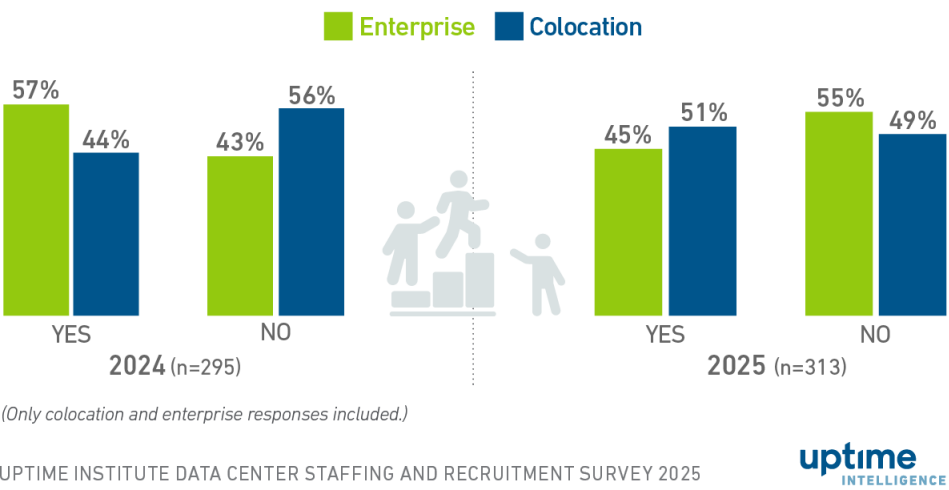


Figure 3 Colocation companies scale up mentorship programs

Does your organization have formal mentoring programs in place for its data center employees?



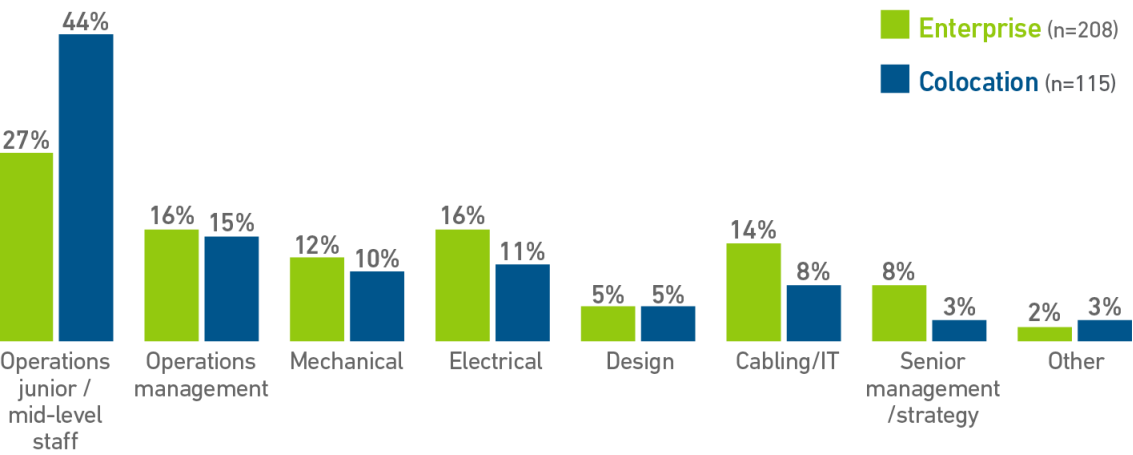
However, despite greater focus on recruiting junior employees, colocation companies are not

seeing overall staffing levels improve. Although they are successfully recruiting more candidates from high schools and universities, this strategy is accompanied by high staff turnover.

For example, Uptime survey data suggests that junior-level operators have the highest reported staff turnover rate, with colocation respondents reporting significantly higher turnover for this group than enterprises in 2025 (**Figure 4**). High turnover rates may explain why colocation companies maintain more mentorship programs than enterprise facilities, as they attempt to retain this group of employees.

Figure 4 Junior operators have highest staff turnover rate

Which job roles in your data center would you say have the highest staff turnover rate? Choose no more than three.



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## Enterprise operators struggle with retention

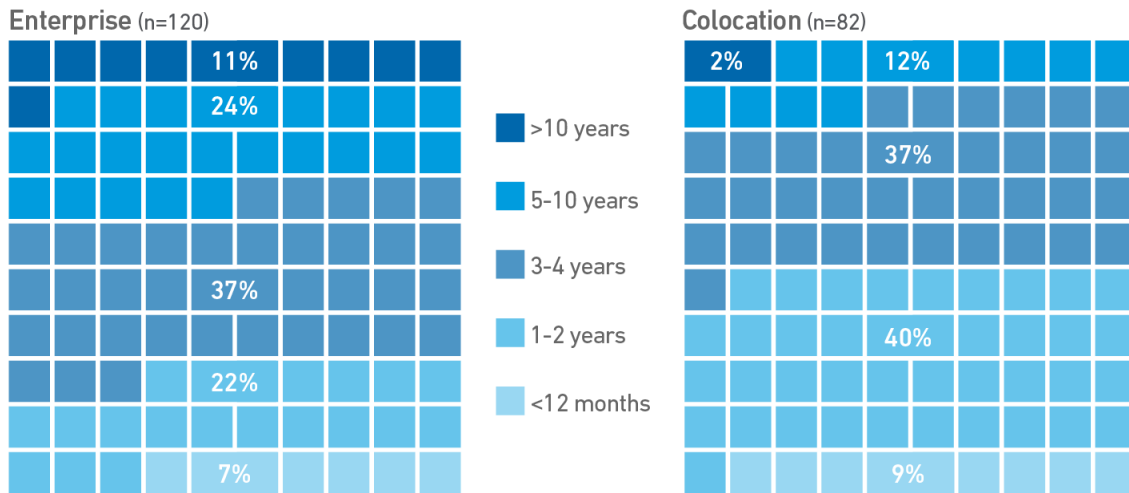
Enterprise operators also struggle with staff retention issues; however, the survey data indicates that they are losing more long-term employees than colocation providers.

Enterprise respondents were twice as likely as colocation respondents to report losing an employee with 5-10 years of tenure in the past 12 months and more than five times as likely to report losing an employee with more than 10 years of tenure in the past 12 months (**Figure 5**).

Although it is possible that these employees are being poached by competitors, many are likely “greying out,” that is, retiring from the industry entirely. Data from the survey indicates that, even after excluding mature markets such as the US and Europe, enterprise companies are still losing significantly more employees with greater tenure than colocation companies.

Figure 5 Enterprises more likely to lose long-term workers

For data center employees that left your organization in the past 12 months, how long would you say they typically worked in your data centers?



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Despite a shortage of staff, many enterprises place little emphasis on onboarding and early-stage staff development. Enterprise respondents who report that their organization offers formal mentorships to new employees declined by 12 percentage points over the past year (see **Figure 3**). This may be related to the loss of veteran staff members who would serve as mentors within the enterprise.

For this sector, it may require other forms of external pressure, such as financial losses and operational downtime, to force more investment in expanding its talent pool.

## Investing to stay ahead

Although both colocation and enterprise companies have managed to maintain operations despite ongoing staffing concerns, execution is not flawless. Those organizations that invest heavily in recruitment and staff development will be better positioned to navigate these challenges, and ensure that projects are fully staffed once completed.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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## **About Uptime Institute**

Uptime Institute is the Global Digital Infrastructure Authority. Its Tier Standard is the IT industry's most trusted and adopted global standard for the proper design, construction, and operation of data centers – the backbone of the digital economy. For over 25 years, the company has served as the standard for data center reliability, sustainability, and efficiency, providing customers assurance that their digital infrastructure can perform at a level that is consistent with their business needs across a wide array of operating conditions.

With its data center Tier Standard & Certifications, Management & Operations reviews, broad range of related risk and performance assessments, and accredited educational curriculum completed by over 10,000 data center professionals, Uptime Institute has helped thousands of companies, in over 100 countries to optimize critical IT assets while managing costs, resources, and efficiency.