



Industry Trends Port Operations

2025

rh Robert Half
Talent Solutions

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data from the study.* 

About the material

This material, aimed at the Ports and Port Operations segment, aims to provide companies with an overview of the prospects and challenges in the near future, from the perspective of human capital and people management.

The material provides an analysis and warning about how professionals can impact companies' results and is based on both data from public sources and research from Robert Half.



The port sector in numbers

1.322 billion tons - cargo volume throughout 2024, 1.35% higher than that recorded in 2023

Transport by type of navigation

Long Haul: 949.5 million t

- Import: ↑ 13.32%
- Export: ↑ 0.15%

Cabotage: 213.7 million t

- Container: ↑ 27.25%
- Other charges: ↓ 2.32%

Inland Roads: 127.9 million t

- National: ↓ 1.57%
- International: ↓ 53.75%

Most popular goods

- Iron ore
- Oil and derivatives (export)
- Containers
- Soybean
- Oil and derivatives (import)

Source: Antaq Statistical Panel (data from January to December 2024)



What to keep an eye on



BR do Mar

BR do Mar, a federal government program that encourages maritime transport between Brazilian ports, has just received a new boost with the regulatory decree signed in July 2025. The measure details operational points of Law No. 14,301/2022 and aims to expand the use of cabotage, simplifying the chartering and flagging of foreign vessels, in addition to attracting new investments to the sector.

This change expands domestic maritime transportation capacity, creates competitiveness compared to road transportation, and increases the country's logistics efficiency. As a result, shipping companies must expand their operations and administrative structures to meet the expected increase in demand in the coming years, especially with the regulatory and operational frameworks expected by 2026. The recent regulation reinforces this movement, bringing greater legal certainty and predictability to investments in the sector.

This movement emphasizes the need for technical training of teams in cabotage standards, regulatory compliance, and traceability of operations. It also expands opportunities for work in port regions, making it essential for companies to develop talent attraction and retention strategies, with competitive compensation packages in coastal cities.

In addition to operational and maritime areas, the expansion of cabotage directly impacts the back offices of companies in this sector. With the growth of operations, there is a greater demand for professionals working in areas such as customer service, documentation, finance, and administration, ensuring the fluidity of operations and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Professionals in demand:

- Qualified seafarers and crew
- Route planners and fleet managers
- Specialists in port operations and integrated logistics
- Naval engineers and maintenance technicians
- Regulatory compliance professionals for cabotage
- Back office professionals in customer service, finance, documentation and administration

New export and import routes

Ports such as Salvador (Tecon), Pecém, and Suape are beginning to receive new direct international export and import routes, a movement that was previously concentrated in the Port of Santos. This trend is linked to the growth of regional industries, local economic development, and investments in expanding port capacity to accommodate large vessels.

These new routes make logistics operations more efficient and increase Brazil's competitiveness in foreign trade, generating direct impacts on the job market. To enable these operations, terminal expansion, automation, and infrastructure are necessary, requiring specialized professionals and increasing demand in operational, logistics, and engineering areas.

These new hubs for the entry and exit of goods are establishing themselves as strategic points for the consolidation and redistribution of cargo, receiving larger vessels that concentrate significant volumes.

To ensure logistical efficiency, ports need to expand their storage areas and optimize internal processes, which requires investments in doubling yards and supporting infrastructure. This scenario reinforces the demand for qualified professionals to work on terminal expansion and modernization projects, especially civil, infrastructure, and automation engineers, as well as project leaders with an integrated vision of the logistics chain.

Professionals in demand:

- Port and terminal operators
- Civil, electrical and mechanical engineers
- Automation and maintenance technicians
- Logistics and operations planning professionals
- Port infrastructure experts

The challenges of the sector - an overview of human capital

Modernization and digital transformation

Technological modernization is a crucial challenge for the port sector, requiring significant investment in new technologies and the adaptation of legacy systems. The integration of modern technologies, such as machine learning, artificial intelligence, and agile methodologies, is essential for the efficiency and competitiveness of port operations.

However, high costs and resistance to change are among the challenges to greater digital transformation in the sector, along with a cultural shift and the need for a skilled workforce with industry and technology knowledge.

Professionals specializing in automation, systems development, cybersecurity, big data, and civil, environmental, and infrastructure engineering are essential to this technological revolution. Although the country has professionals with these characteristics and specializations, competition and a lack of specific sector knowledge hinder talent attraction.

To become more attractive, the sector has invested in changing its traditional image. Continuous training programs and demonstrations of a culture of innovation have proven attractive to professionals seeking change, challenges, and growth. The creation of associations and initiatives to promote innovation are also key strategies for fostering a culture of modernization and overcoming the image of a stagnant sector.



The challenges of the sector - an overview of human capital

ESG

The integration of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices into port operations has become a priority, reflecting the industry's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. This focus is transforming the workplace and driving the need for a diverse and knowledgeable workforce.

In Brazil, as part of the environment pillar, port operations are adopting innovative technologies and processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve waste disposal.

In the social sphere, there is a significant effort to promote diversity and inclusion in the sector, traditionally dominated by a male workforce and considered non-inclusive.

Initiatives such as development and training programs, equalizing the gender ratio—both in operational and managerial positions—and changes in the workplace, such as separate bathrooms, are examples of campaigns and policies that aim to promote gender equity and inclusion of other groups, creating a more diverse and fair work environment.

In terms of governance, the sector is strengthening its practices to ensure transparency and accountability. Strong governance and engagement with the local community are crucial to establishing a trustworthy and sustainable reputation.

Adopting an ESG approach improves the port sector's visibility as responsible and innovative and can be a tool for attracting professionals seeking companies committed to ethical and sustainable values.

The challenges of the sector - an overview of human capital

Qualification and training of the workforce

The lack of skilled labor is a critical challenge for the port sector, directly impacting several essential operations. The shortage is particularly acute in technical and specialized positions, such as Equipment Operator, Automation Specialist, Maintenance Engineer, and Logistics Planning Analyst.

The complexity of port operations, combined with the need for specific skills and the constant pressure to reduce costs, exacerbates the situation. In this context, the lack of incentives for training in the sector and logistical challenges, such as labor mobility, complicate the resolution of this problem.

Internal training programs emerge as a viable response, given the lack of courses and specializations directly geared toward the port sector. Companies have adopted internal training academies, encouraged distance learning, and established partnerships for on-site training to address this shortage. The creation of apprenticeship programs and initiatives such as training women for port services are examples of efforts to develop the local workforce.



The challenges of the sector - an overview of human capital

Talent attraction and retention

Talent attraction and retention in the port sector face significant challenges due to specific skilled labor needs, competition from other markets, and geographic constraints. The specific nature of operations and the growing demand for technical skills are reflected in a shortage of skilled labor.

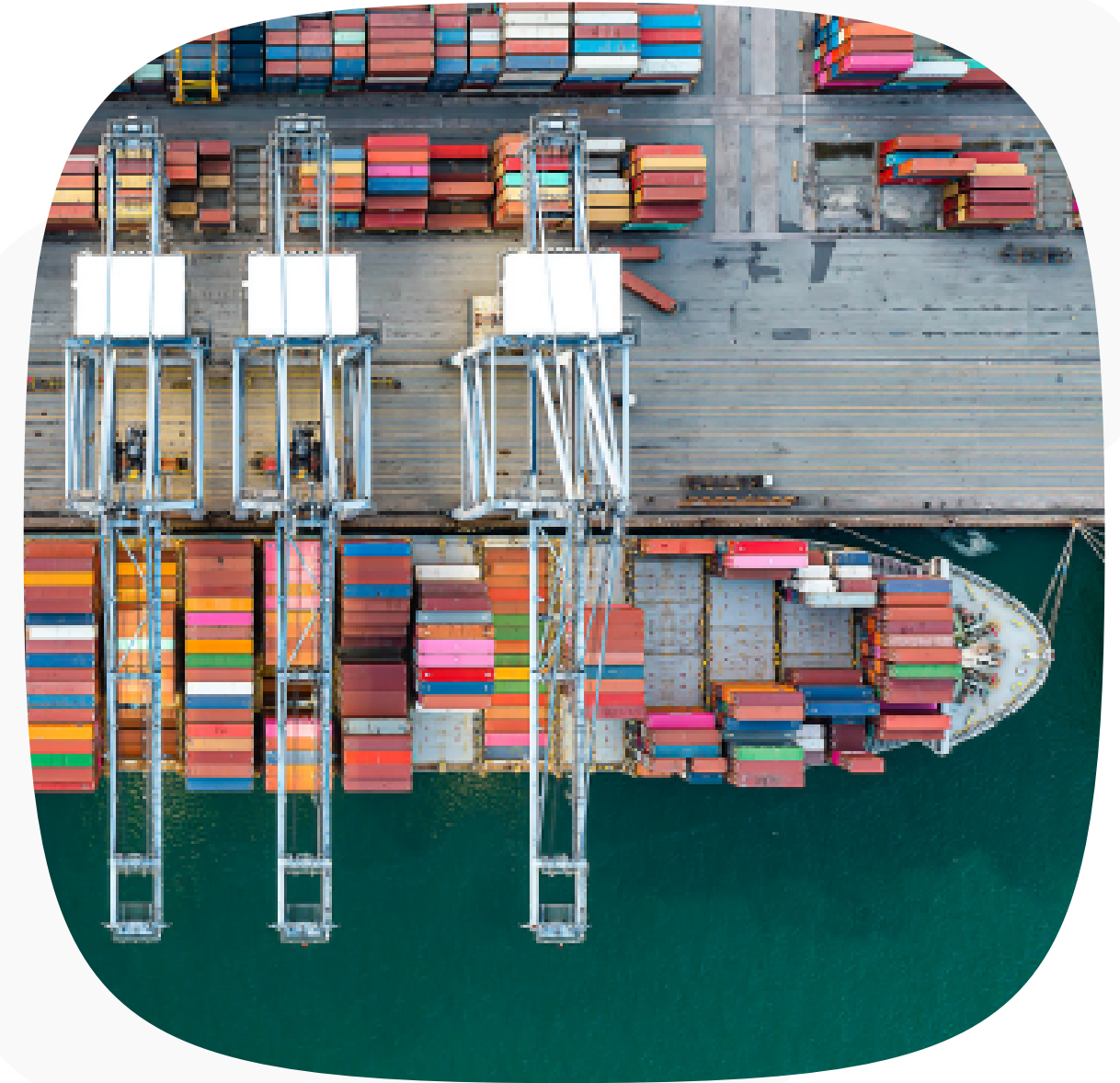
Competition from more attractive sectors, both in terms of working conditions and development opportunities, contributes to the attrition of professionals. Furthermore, the sector's image and the lack of an innovative organizational culture hinder the attraction of new talent, especially among younger generations seeking a modern and transformative work environment.

To combat these challenges, port companies have intensified efforts to continuously improve working conditions, offering financial benefits, flexible work schedules, and investing in education and training. Fostering an organizational culture that values innovation and employee development is essential for long-term employee engagement and is a key strategy for fostering a culture of modernization and overcoming the image of a stagnant sector.



Benefits most offered by the sector

1. **Medical and dental care**
2. **Meal/Voucher**
3. **Physical activity - Gympass/Totalpass**
4. **Private pension plan**
5. **Education assistance**
6. **Moving support (when needed)**



In-demand roles

The main positions in demand in the Consumer and Retail sectors for permanent (full-time) and project-based (temporary and third-party) hiring

PERMANENT (FULL-TIME)	PROJECT-BASED
Port Operation Supervision	Automation Specialist
Maintenance Engineering	Systems development
Logistics Planning Analyst	Systems and network engineering
Operations Management	Environmental Management Specialist
Safety Engineering	Compliance and Regulatory Analyst
Contract Management	PMO / Project Manager

In-demand skills



SOFT SKILLS	HARD SKILLS
Resilience	Technical knowledge of the sector
Teamwork	Local and international legislation
Autonomy	Tax knowledge
Fast and efficient decision making	
Concern about deadlines and security	

How to Use Our Salary Table

Percentiles: The salaries for the positions listed in this document do not include bonuses, benefits, or other forms of compensation. We've divided the salary for each position into three percentiles to help you customize salary offers for each role.

25th

Candidate - new to the role or still developing skills relevant to the job.

50th

Candidate - has the necessary experience and possesses most of the skills relevant to the job.

75th

Candidate – has more experience than typical and possesses all the relevant skills for the job, as well as specializations and certifications.

For more information on percentiles and salary readings, visit the Robert Half Salary Guide.

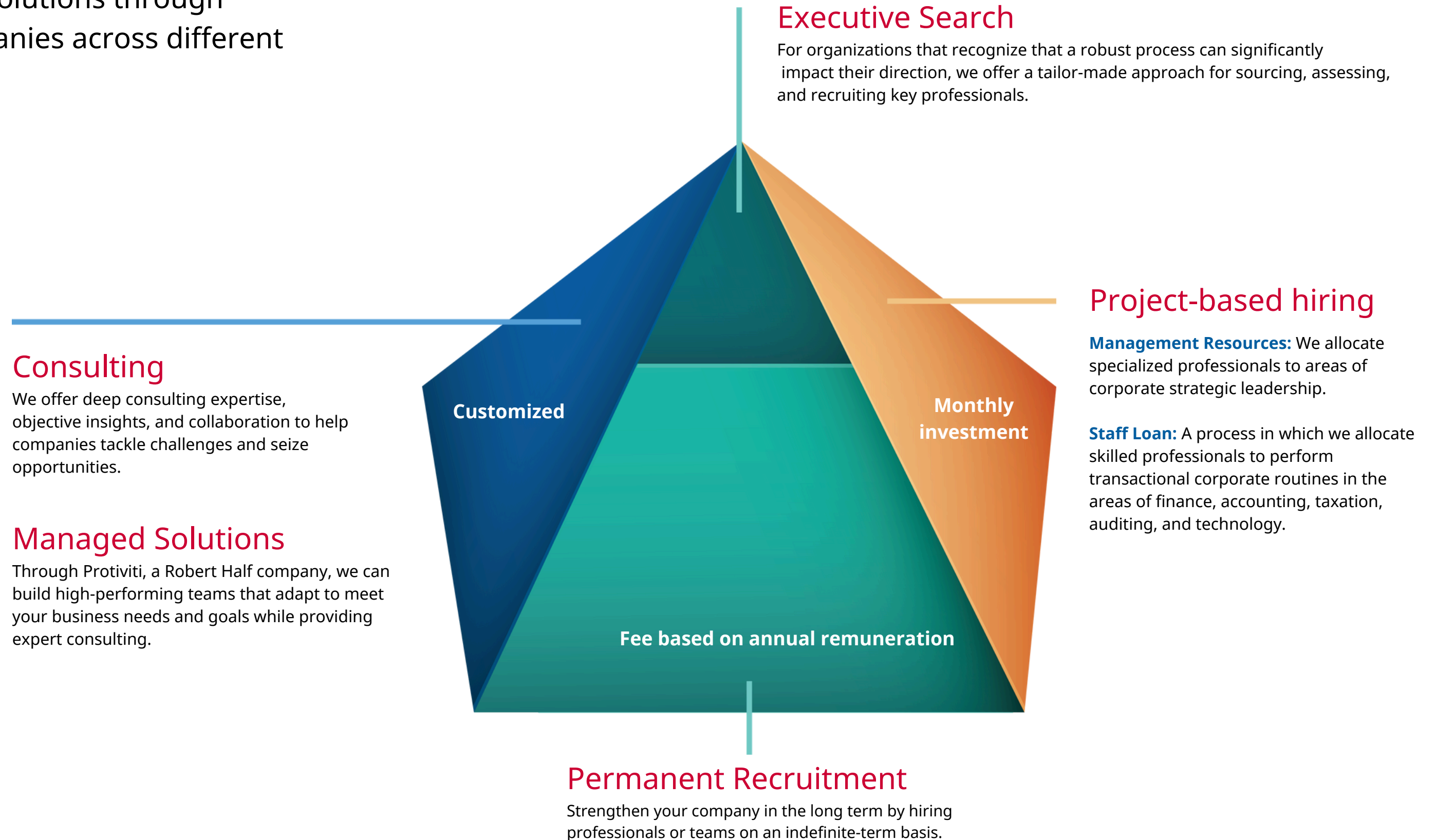
Salary tables

Average salaries (in Brazilian Reais) in the Port Operations sectors, derived from interviews and market knowledge of Robert Half consultants:

POSITIONS	25TH	50TH	75TH
General Manager	40.000	50.000	65.000
Operations Directorate/COO	35.000	40.000	45.000
Operations/Terminal Management	20.000	25.000	28.000
Legal Management	18.000	22.000	25.000
ESG Specialist	12.000	15.000	18.000
Operations Coordination	9.000	12.000	15.000
Customer Service Coordination	9.000	12.000	15.000
Maintenance Engineering	8.000	10.000	13.000
Infrastructure Engineering	12.000	15.000	18.000
Safety Engineering	10.000	13.000	16.000
Project Controller	13.000	15.000	18.000
Sales Executive	6.000	8.500	12.000
PMO / Project Management	15.000	18.000	22.000
Systems Analyst	6.500	9.000	12.000
Planning Analyst (Ship and Yard Planner)	7.000	8.500	10.000
Transportation Analyst	4.000	6.000	9.000
Compliance and Regulatory Analyst	9.000	12.000	15.000

Robert Half Solutions

Robert Half offers talent solutions through various services for companies across different industries.



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Rely on the experience of market-specialized consultants and the unique advantages of Robert Half:



Communication: our way of working, proprietary tools, and technology allow us to maintain constant contact with our clients and candidates, keeping them informed at every stage of the recruitment process.



Choices: Each consultant's network allows access to a wide range of professionals across the country, enabling clients to choose from the best candidates presented.



Match: We work without exclusivity, presenting the most suitable professionals for our clients' needs.



Speed: Candidate selection decisions are made through a collective decision-making process among several consultants, allowing us to present candidates quickly, as a large team is working for each position or project.

About Robert Half

It is the first and largest specialized recruitment company in the world. Founded in 1948, the company operates in Brazil by recruiting permanent professionals and those for specialized projects in the areas of finance, accounting, financial markets, insurance, engineering, technology, legal, human resources, marketing and sales, and executive leadership roles.

With a global presence and operations in North America, Europe, Asia, South America, and Oceania, Robert Half appears on lists of the world's most admired companies and is also recognized for its commitment to promoting equality and fostering an inclusive culture.



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