BUILDXPARTNERS • INSIGHT REPORT

2026 Hiring Outlook

MediaTech, EdTech & FinTech: what we're seeing in the leadership market

This short outlook draws on what we're seeing directly through our BuildxAlpha and BuildxSigma searches across MediaTech, EdTech, and FinTech, our three deepest areas of practice. It's not a survey of the market at large. It's a practitioner's view: what's actually changing in the leadership profiles our clients are hiring for, and what that means if you're building out a team in one of these sectors this year.

MediaTech

Platform-scale experience is becoming non-negotiable

Content and product leaders who've only operated at steady-state maturity are struggling in scale-up interviews. Clients are increasingly explicit: they want someone who has lived through a platform doubling or tripling its user base, not just someone who has managed one that's already mature.

What we're screening for

- Direct experience scaling a platform through a step-change in users or content volume, not just maintaining one.
- Comfort operating with incomplete data during rapid growth phases.
- A track record of shipping product changes under real time pressure, not just planning them.

EdTech

The learning-outcome and business-metric split is closing

The strongest candidates we're placing can hold both sides of the EdTech tension at once: the actual learning outcome the product exists to deliver, and the business metric the company is accountable to. Candidates who lead with only one side are increasingly a harder sell to boards.

What we're screening for

- Ability to articulate learning outcomes in the same conversation as retention or revenue metrics.
- Experience partnering with, not just managing, academic or curriculum stakeholders.
- A bias toward measurable pilots over big-bang product launches.

FinTech

Regulatory fluency has moved from 'nice to have' to a first screen

We're seeing regulatory and compliance fluency evaluated earlier in the process than it used to be, often before technical or leadership competency. For finance and risk leadership specifically, a strong candidate without direct regulated-lending or payments experience is now a much harder placement than it was two years ago.

What we're screening for

- Direct exposure to the specific regulatory regime relevant to the mandate (lending, payments, wealth), not adjacent experience.
- A track record of working with regulators or auditors directly, not just through a compliance team.
- Investor-facing experience, particularly for CFO-level mandates ahead of a funding round.

If you're hiring in one of these sectors

BuildxAlpha runs retained executive and board search; BuildxSigma covers VP, Head, and Director-level hiring through contingency, retainer, RPO, and build & deploy models. Both practices run search and hiring specifically informed by what's above, not a generic playbook.

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