



The ABC Islands talent challenge. And why Latin America is the answer.

By Conexión Executive & Professional Search - May 2026

Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao. Three islands with strong, internationally oriented economies and a structural talent problem that most island companies have been working around for years rather than solving.

The local professional pool is thin at all levels. It has always been a challenge but with the ongoing economical growth, the issue is getting bigger.

The island economies are too small to produce the depth of specialist talent that growing businesses need, and the gap widens as those businesses scale. Since the islands have limited options for advanced education, many teenagers / young adults move to the Netherlands to study in their preferred field.

Once in the Netherlands, they develop relationships, get jobs and build a career. In many situations, these talented and educated professionals delay their return to the islands.

The traditional answer, recruit from Europe or the US, is difficult, expensive, and produces mixed results. International candidates often don't see the islands as a real career option. Others struggle with the transition to small island life. Relocation packages are expensive. And the candidate who seemed genuinely excited about Aruba in the interview sometimes leaves eighteen months later when the novelty wears off.

There is a better answer. It has been sitting ninety minutes away by plane for years.

Why Latin America and why now

The professional class in Latin America, and in Colombia in particular, has changed significantly over the past decade. English levels have risen. International work experience is more common. Remote work for European

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and American companies is now standard practice across entire industries; technology, finance, data, engineering, creative services.

Colombian professionals understand international business standards. They communicate well across cultures. They are accustomed to working within structures and expectations set by European and North American companies. And many of them, particularly those who have already experienced remote work for overseas clients, find the prospect of working for an ABC Islands company genuinely attractive. The combination of an international environment, island lifestyle, and professional stability is a real draw, not a compromise.

The islands and Colombia share the same time zone. The flight is short enough for regular travel. The cultural gap is navigable in a way that the European-to-Caribbean gap often isn't.

The solution to the ABC Islands talent problem has been in the same time zone all along.

The two models and when each works

Remote from Latin America

For roles where physical presence is not required, a Colombia-based remote hire is often the most efficient and cost-effective solution available to an ABC Islands company. The candidate works in their home market, in your time zone, integrated into your team and systems as a full colleague.

This model works particularly well for technical and specialist roles: software development, system administration, data analysis, finance, accounting, engineering support. Output is measurable. Collaboration is digital. The cost structure is significantly more favorable than European recruitment, and the quality of talent available is high.

The main hesitation we hear from island companies considering this model is management anxiety: how do you manage a team you can't see?

It's a legitimate question, and it's almost always resolved once a company understands how Colombian professionals actually work in remote environments. They are experienced with it. They know how to communicate across distance. They have been doing it, for US and European companies, for

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years. Even before the covid pandemic, working remotely for US companies was pretty normal for Colombian tech professionals.

We've built entire remote teams in Colombia for ABC Islands clients. What looks like an organizational complexity becomes straightforward when it's structured correctly from the start.

Relocation to the island

For roles that require a physical presence, hospitality management, client-facing operations, senior leadership, technical roles with on-site requirements, relocation is the answer. And Latin American professionals, particularly from Colombia, adapt well to island life.

The ABC Islands have always been international environments. The mix of cultures, the Dutch influence, the tourism economy, the multilingual daily life, these are familiar reference points for someone from Bogotá or Medellín who has already navigated cross-cultural environments professionally. The transition is real, but it is manageable in a way that European-to-island relocation often is not.

What makes relocation work and what makes relocation fail, is preparation. The candidate needs to understand what island life actually involves before they commit. The company needs to support the practical logistics of the paperwork & move. And the cultural onboarding in the first months matters more than most companies invest in.

We support all of this. Candidate preparation, practical guidance, and preparing the cultural integration that makes the difference between a hire that stays and one that leaves.

The candidate who arrives prepared stays. The one who arrives surprised rarely does.

What goes wrong when companies try this alone

Island companies that attempt to source Latin American talent independently run into predictable problems. The outreach doesn't land because it often lacks visibility and credibility in the LATAM market.

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The assessment process doesn't go deep enough on cultural fit and adaptability. The candidate arrives on the island without adequate preparation and struggles with the transition.

Or the process simply stalls. Without a network in the LATAM market, without the credibility to reach the right candidates, and without the assessment framework to evaluate cultural fit alongside technical capability, the search either takes too long or produces the wrong shortlist.

We bridge that gap. We know the LATAM talent pool. We know the ABC Islands business environment. We know what a successful placement looks like in both the remote and relocation models, because we've done both, across multiple industries, across all three islands.

What we've placed

The range of placements we've made for ABC Islands clients reflects both the breadth of the talent available in Latin America and the range of roles that the model works for.

In technology: an IBM iSeries team and a software development team for a Curaçao firm, all working remotely from Colombia, visiting the island for client-facing work. A network engineer for a Curaçao IT company, fully integrated into island operations from Colombia.

In hospitality: a Food & Beverage Manager for a boutique hotel in Aruba, relocated from Colombia.

Hospitality staff for a brand new hotel from the Marriott group in Curaçao (the Pymont Beach Resort), ready to relocate and get trained for their international hospitality career.

In automotive services: a car technician for TopDrive in Aruba, relocated from Colombia and integrated into the local team.

Different industries, different functions, different delivery models. The common thread: Latin American talent, properly identified, properly assessed, and properly prepared for the island environment.

Every placement we've made for an ABC Islands client started with the same question: what does this person need to succeed here, not just technically, but in this specific environment?

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OUR VIEW

The talent problem is structural. The solution needs to be too.

The ABC Islands have over 5000 vacancies in 2026. This is because of the strong growth that specifically Aruba and Curaçao are experiencing. This is not going away soon.

Most companies on the islands approach their talent challenge reactively, a vacancy opens, they post it locally, it doesn't fill, they think about European recruitment, it takes too long or doesn't work, and they settle for whoever is available.

The companies that solve this problem properly make a different decision. They build a relationship with a firm that understands both the island market and the Latin American talent pool. They think about workforce planning before vacancies become urgent. And they approach the remote and relocation models as genuine strategic options, not last resorts.

The good news is that the local governments are working with the businesses to make it easier to hire foreign professionals.

We are the only boutique search firm in LATAM that operates specifically at the intersection of Latin American talent and ABC Islands demand, with the track record on both the remote and relocation models to back it up.

The solution to your talent challenge is ninety minutes away. We know how to get there.

Tell us your situation

Whether you need a remote team in Colombia, a senior hire who will relocate to the island, or simply want to understand what's possible for your specific situation, we're happy to have an honest conversation.

No pitch deck. No standard proposal. Just a direct conversation with people who have done this before.

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