



Hiring, Compensation & Benefits Report 2025

Your essential guide to attract, motivate, and retain top talent.



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About the study

Ready to navigate the dynamic landscape of Southeast Asia's job market in 2025?

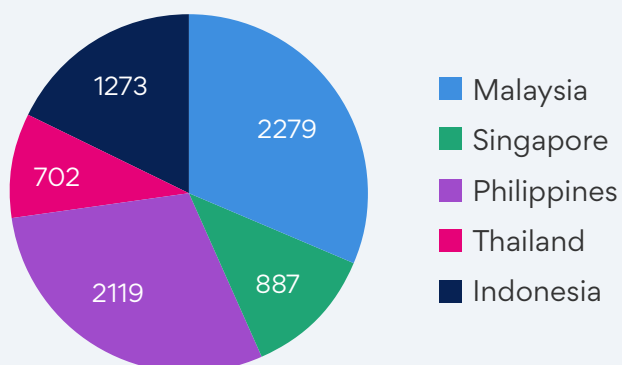
We are proud to share with you the latest edition of our **Hiring, Compensation and Benefits** report – Southeast Asia (SEA) version. This report delves into the outlook of the hiring market, hiring activity and plans, compensation and benefits offered by companies, with a focus on AI in hiring and workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across SEA.

Data was gathered from 7,260 hirers and HR professionals across 5 SEA countries (887 in Singapore, 2,279 in Malaysia, 1,273 in Indonesia, 702 in Thailand, and 2,119 in the Philippines), spanning various industries and job roles. We present this to you as part of our ongoing commitment as your **No.1 Trusted Talent Partner in Asia**. These results provide deep actionable insights, enabling you to better connect talent to **#BetterMatches**.

Key findings from this report include:

- ✓ SEA and country hiring outlook in the market
- ✓ Improvements in compensation offered by other companies in SEA and country
- ✓ Benefits offered by companies to attract and retain highly-skilled talent
- ✓ General perceptions of AI in hiring and DEI initiatives

Number of participating employers



Foreword

Aimee Hutton

Head of APAC Marketing Strategy



2024 was a year of significant change, with technological advancements, economic shifts, and evolving societal values reshaping expectations in Southeast Asia. 2025 is expected to be another year of change and strong growth, with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecasting a 4.9% growth in 2025 for the entire region.

At SEEK, we are proud to be at the forefront of this evolution, constantly innovating to meet the dynamic needs of employers and job seekers in Southeast Asia and beyond. To better serve employers and job seekers across the region, SEEK unified its Jobstreet, JobsDB, and SEEK platforms, enhancing access to talent, job opportunities, and search relevance. With our unified platform, we can now innovate faster, roll out new products and features more efficiently across the region, and create unparalleled value for our users. Whether you're an employer looking for the right talent or a professional seeking your next career move, our platform offers the tools and support to make that connection seamless and meaningful.

As part of our commitment to support both employers and employees, we have released the Hiring, Compensation and Benefits report annually across different countries. This year, we have combined these reports into a comprehensive regional version, which explores key workforce factors, including hiring trends, compensation, benefits, as well as gathering insights from over 7,000 HR professionals across countries. It examines hirer confidence, headcount shifts, salary increments, the role of AI in the hiring workplace and the growing importance of flexibility, well-being, and fairness in workplace offerings.

Foreword



Some of the key trends highlighted in the report:

- ✓ **Hiring plans for H1 2025:** It is looking positive for the job market in Southeast Asia, as 36% of businesses surveyed forecast that the job market will be more active in the first half of the year, and 34% anticipate increased activity in the second half.
- ✓ **Increased importance of salary increases:** Across Southeast Asia, 79% of companies awarded salary increases, with Thailand leading at 85%, followed by Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines at similar percentages (77% ~ 79%). The Philippines and Malaysia led the movement with more than 10% increments, while most Singapore and Thailand companies provided 1–5% increments.
- ✓ **AI's increasing influence:** 66% of businesses across SEA consider candidates' AI knowledge when hiring, while 29% of companies see AI knowledge as highly important.
- ✓ **Diversity and inclusivity needs more prioritisation:** The Philippines and Thailand lead the way in DEI adoption, likely influenced by their distinctive cultures and government policies aimed at protecting marginalised groups. However, Malaysia and Singapore lag in DEI implementation, due to reasons such as lack of perceived benefits or ROI from the associated costs. Additionally, DEI policies are not mandated by law in these countries.

As we navigate these exciting changes, SEEK remains committed to its ambition: to help 500 million people develop their careers and connect five million companies with the right talent. The findings presented in this report are a testament to our dedication to understanding the needs of our customers and delivering solutions that make a meaningful impact. We hope the incredibly rich insights presented here can help you and your company develop strong employee propositions and benefits to retain top talents across the region.

We'll continue to see you this year with SEEK as your partner in this journey. Together, we are shaping the future of work, and connecting the right people to the right job opportunities.

Aimee Hutton
Head of APAC Marketing Strategy, SEEK



Demographics and methodology

For this report, we spoke to **7,260** hirers and HR professionals between September and October 2024. A diverse range of industries and company sizes was included to ensure a balanced and unbiased result. Subsequently, the data was evenly balanced across the five countries for comprehensive analysis.

Survey Participants

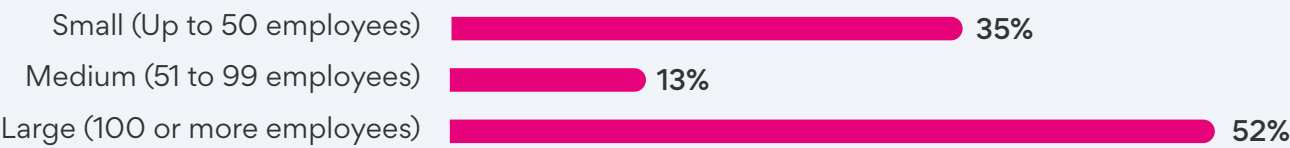
7,260

Survey Period: Sep – Oct 2024

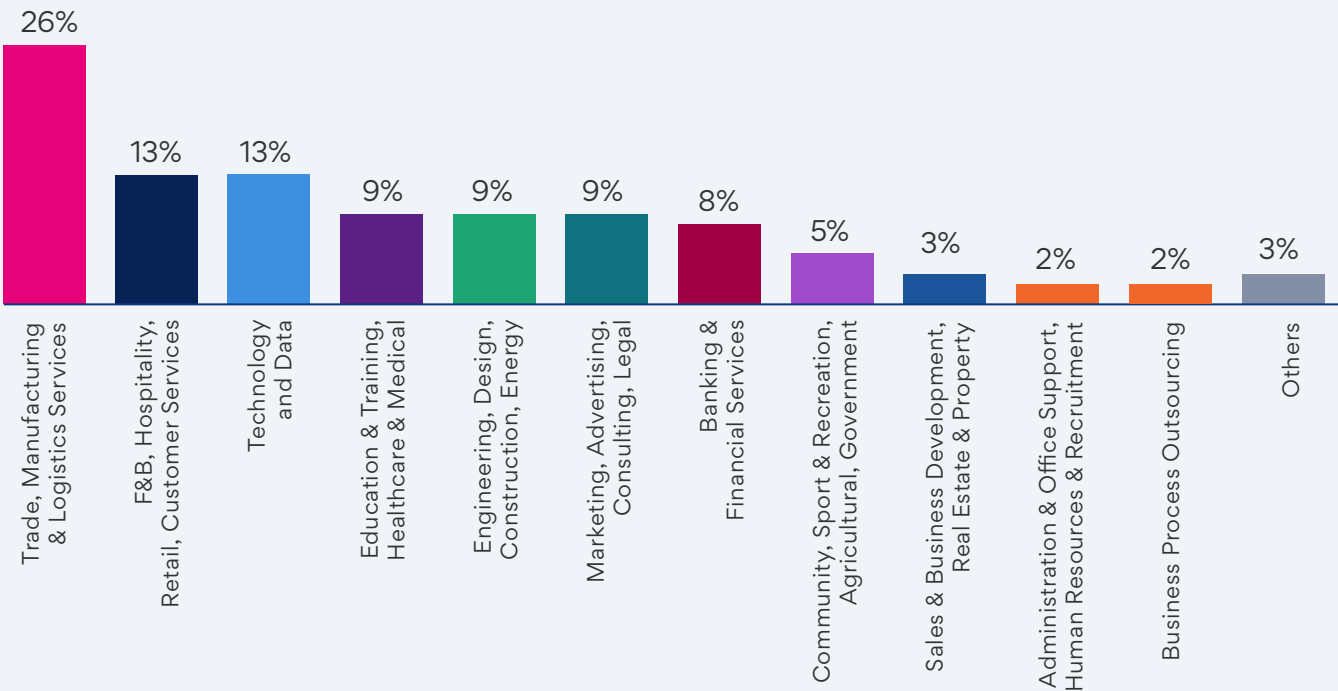
Survey Methodology:

Self-completed online survey distributed to hirers and HR professionals via email.

Business Size of Surveyed Hirers / Professionals



Industries of Surveyed Hirers / Professionals



Section 1

Hiring trends in SEA job market: today and tomorrow



Hiring the best is your most important task.

-Steve Jobs

The first section of the report examines both past and future hiring trends, offering valuable insights into the evolving job market. These insights can help employers refine their recruitment strategies and empower job seekers to better prepare for opportunities in the year ahead.

This section addresses the following questions:

- 1 How active is the SEA and local hiring market and what is the outlook for the next year?
- 2 What are the hiring activities in 2024, and what types of employees and job functions were hired?
- 3 What are the workforce reducing activities in 2024, and which types of employees were let go?
- 4 What are the future hiring plans for permanent employees?
- 5 What are the future hiring plans for contract or temporary employees?



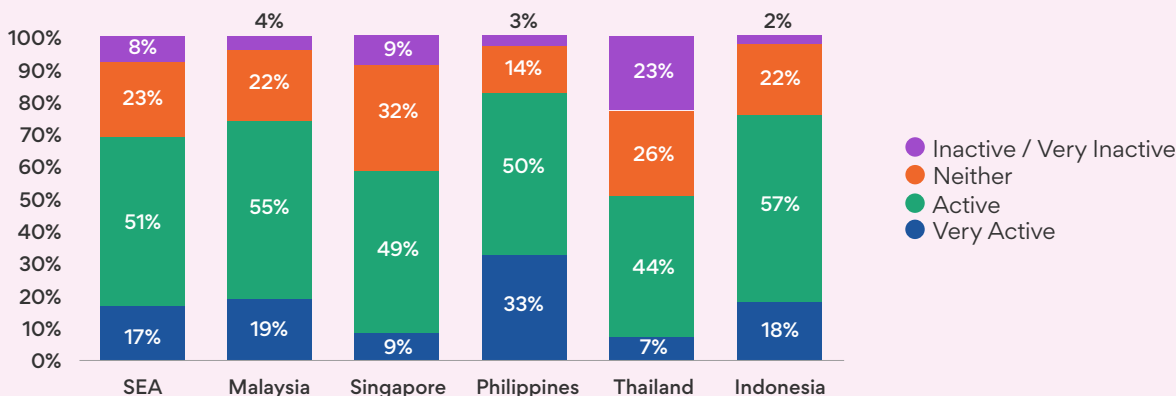
Employment market expectations

Despite significant global economic uncertainty in 2024, the **Southeast Asian (SEA) job market demonstrated resilience**, with 68% of respondents describing it as active. The Philippines emerged as the most active market, with 83% viewing it as active or very active. In contrast, Singapore and Thailand report the lowest activity levels at 58% and 51% respectively.

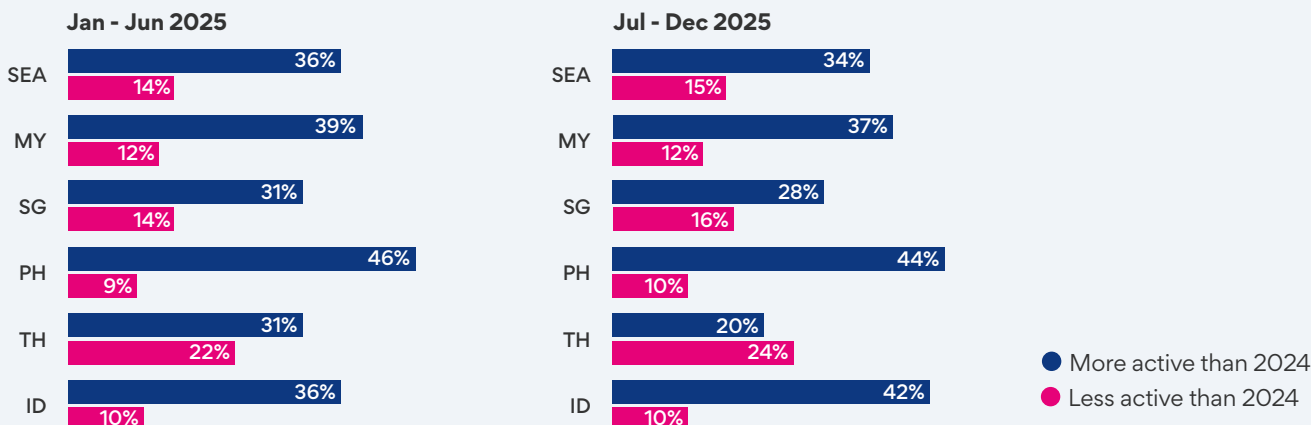
Confidence remains high for 2025, with 36% forecasting increased job market activity in the first half of the year, and 34% anticipate further growth in the second half. This reflects a strongly optimistic outlook for the region.

However, optimism varies across markets. In Singapore and Thailand, more respondents predict a less active job market in 2025, likely influenced by economic conditions and global events.

Activity level in the SEA job market in 2024



Forecast on activity level in the SEA job market in 2025



Overview of hiring activity in 2024

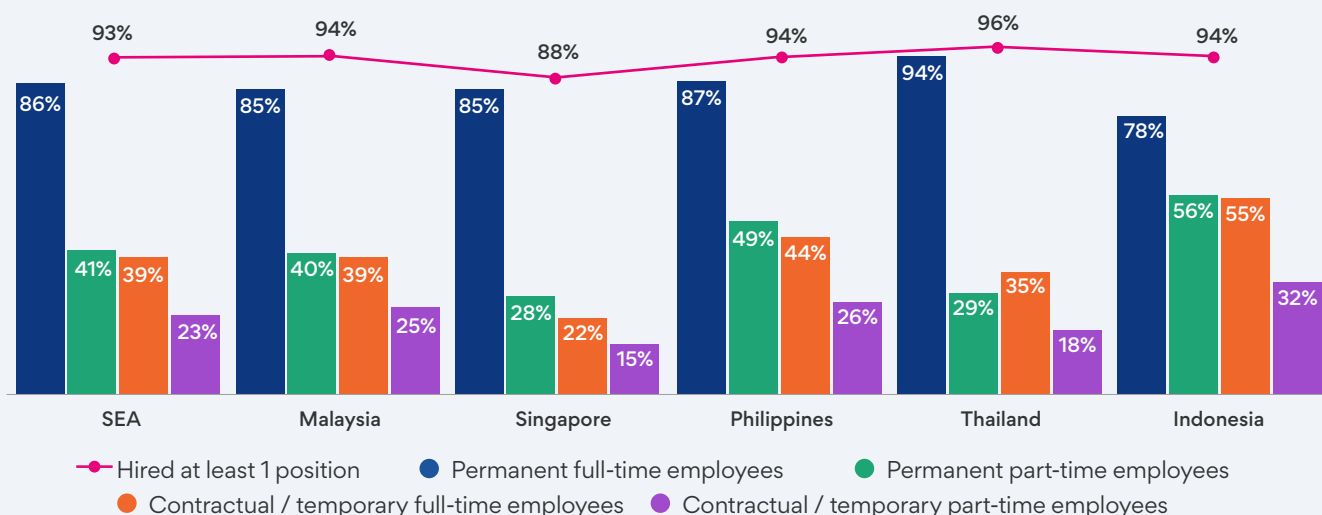
	SEA 2023	SEA 2024	Gap in percentage points (p.p.)
Hired at least 1 position	96%	93%	-3
Hired:			
Permanent full-time	87%	86%	-1
Permanent part-time	33%	41%	+8
Contractual / temporary full-time	38%	39%	+1
Contractual / temporary part-time	17%	23%	+6

Our reports highlight **consistent employment growth across Southeast Asia**, as reflected in national statistics from agencies such as Malaysia’s Department of Statistics (DOSM), Singapore’s Ministry of Manpower (MOM), and the Philippine Statistics Authority. In 2024, 93% of companies recruited at least one employee, maintaining a hiring rate similar to 2023. Permanent part-time employees led this growth, accounting for 41% of new hires—an 8 percentage point (p.p.) increase from last year—followed by a 6 p.p. rise in contractual/temporary part-time hires.

Thailand recorded the highest percentage of hiring at 96%, primarily driven by permanent full-time employees, despite a less active job market. This surge reflects a strong commitment to building a stable, long-term workforce, particularly in the Philippines and Thailand.

Meanwhile, the Philippines and Indonesia saw significant growth in the hiring of contractual/temporary full-time employees. This trend underscores the increasing reliance on a temporary workforce, driven by business expansion, demand for new skill sets, and the preference for workforce flexibility.

% of employers that hired and types of employees hired in 2004



Overview of workforce reduction in 2024

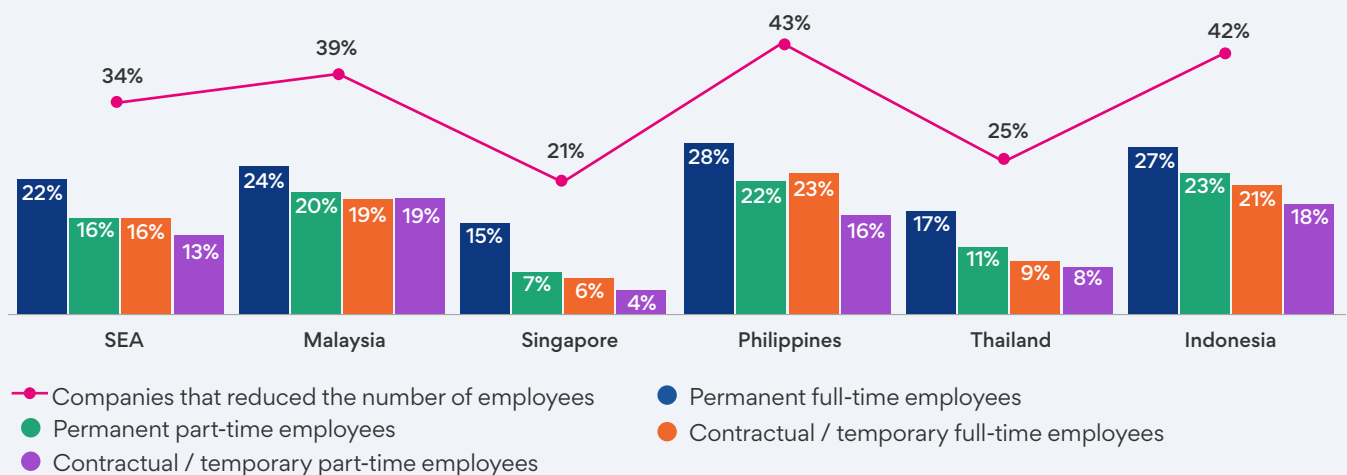
	SEA 2023	SEA 2024	Gap in percentage points (p.p.)
Reduced the number of employees	24%	34%	+10
Reduced			
Permanent full-time	15%	22%	+7
Permanent part-time	10%	16%	+6
Contractual / temporary full-time	12%	16%	+4
Contractual / temporary part-time	6%	13%	+7

Despite strong hiring trends, **many companies reduced their workforce in 2024** through layoffs, retrenchments, or by not replacing employees who resigned.

Approximately 34% of companies reported workforce reductions, with permanent full-time, permanent part-time, and contractual/temporary part-time employees seeing the largest increases in cutbacks. The Philippines and Indonesia experienced the highest workforce reductions, likely due to their greater reliance on flexible workforces that can be adjusted as needed. In contrast, Singapore and Thailand recorded the lowest workforce reduction rates.

On a positive note, many affected employees likely transitioned to new roles, as national statistics across these countries indicate **continued employment growth and declining unemployment rates**.

% of employers that reduced workforce and types of employees reduced in 2024

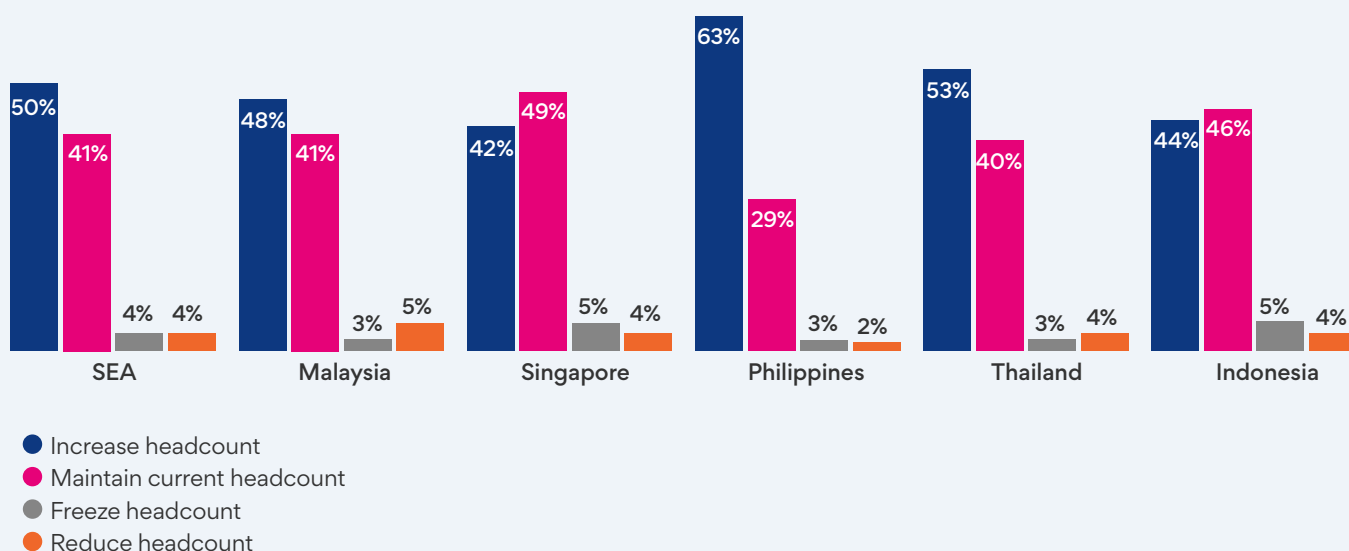


Permanent employee hiring plans for H1 2025

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecasts robust GDP growth across Southeast Asia in 2025, boosting business optimism. Half of the surveyed companies plan to expand their permanent workforce in the first half of the year, driven by business expansion (77%), the need for new roles or skill sets (54%), and replacing departed staff (40%). The Philippines leads this trend with 63% of businesses planning expansion, followed by Thailand at 53%.

Meanwhile, 45% of companies aim to maintain workforce stability by freezing headcount, with Singapore contributing significantly to this trend. Only 4% of businesses plan to reduce staff, citing cost reduction, restructuring, and potential economic challenges as key reasons.

Jan – Jun 2025 hiring plans for permanent employees



Notes:

Maintain headcount = Maintain no. of employees and can replace / rehire if employee resigns

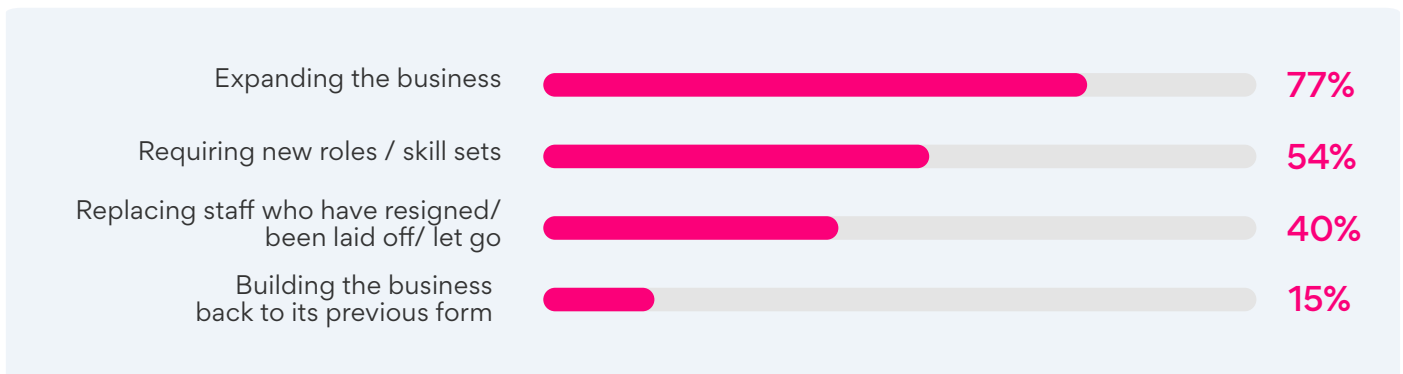
Freeze headcount = Maintain no. of employees but cannot replace / rehire if employee resigns

Reduce headcount = Reduce no. of employees by lay-off / retrench employees

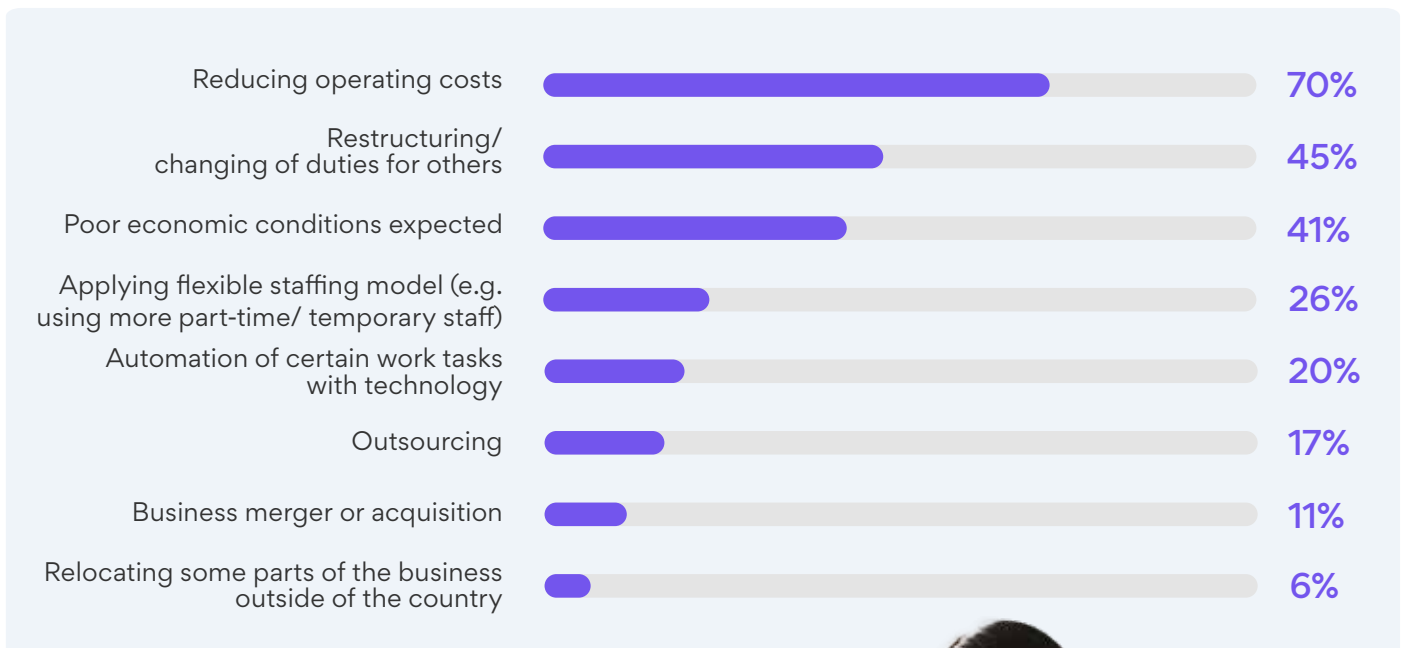
Others = Close / relocate business

Reasons for increasing or reducing permanent employee headcount

Reasons for increasing headcount in H1 2025



Reasons for reducing headcount in H1 2025

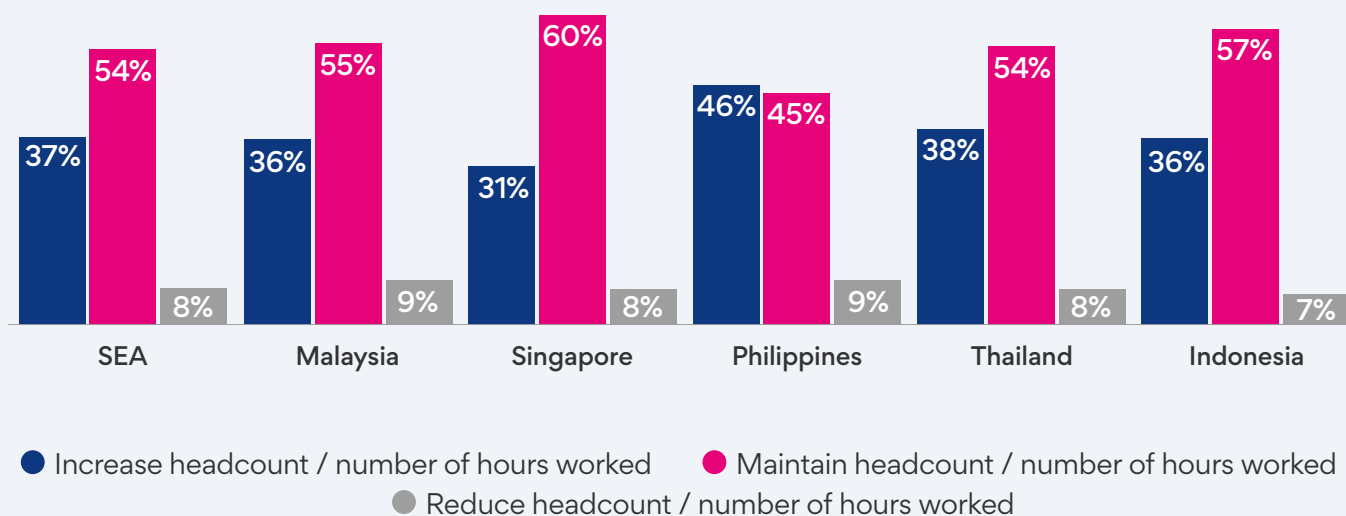


Contract / Temporary employee hiring plans for H1 2025

The hiring landscape in 2025 is set to evolve, with 37% of companies planning to increase their reliance on contract or temporary employees. This is primarily driven by business expansion, the need for new roles or skill sets, and a preference for a more flexible workforce. The Philippines' heavy reliance on contract and temporary workers is set to continue, with 46% of companies leading this trend in hiring for the first half of 2025.

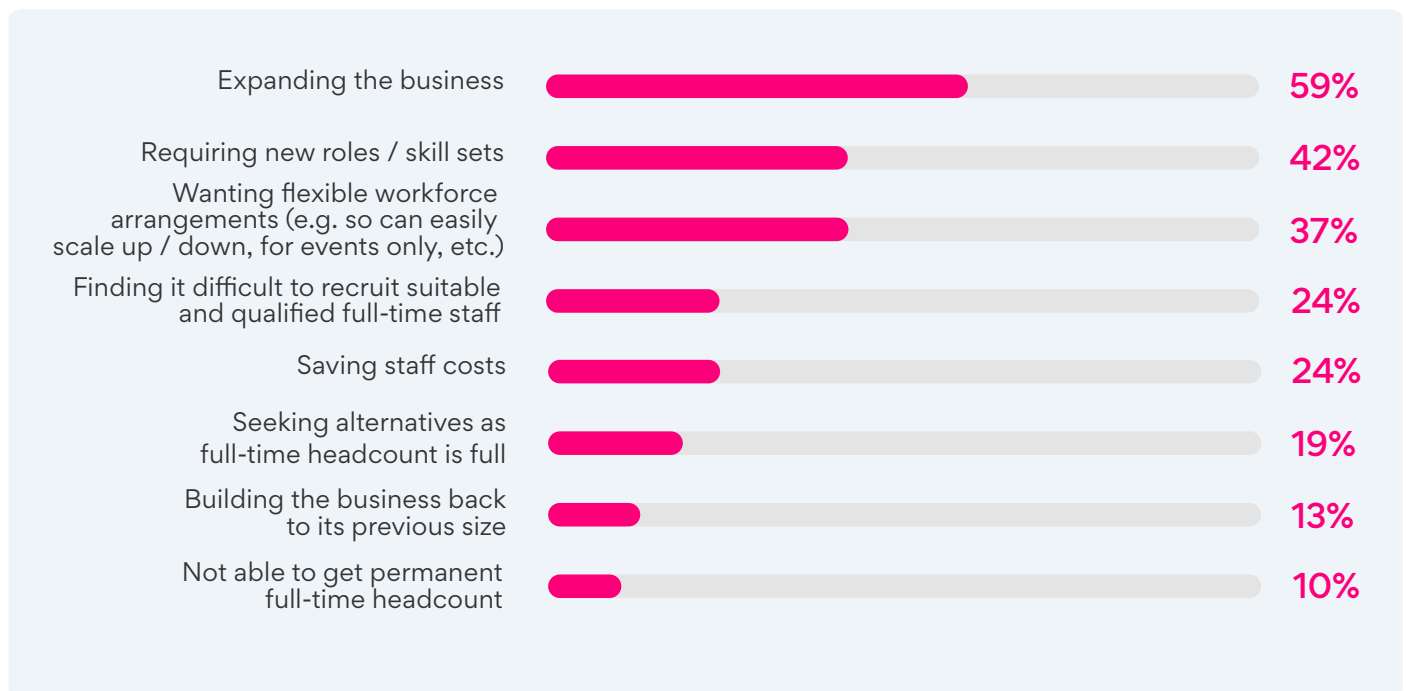
Majority of companies intend to maintain headcount or number of hours of contract/temporary employees worked, while only 8% plan reductions. These reductions are attributed to cost-cutting measures, restructuring, and preparations for potential economic challenges.

Jan – Jun 2025 hiring plans for contract / temporary staff

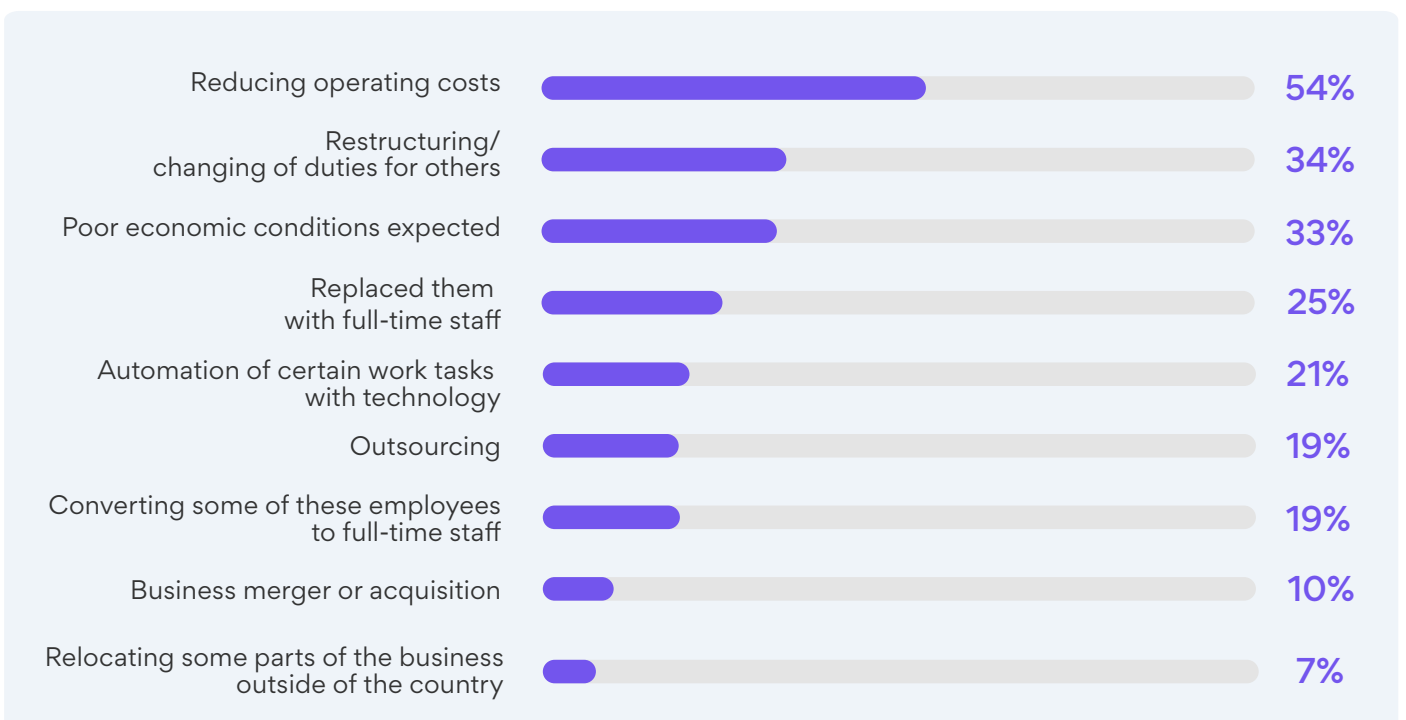


Reasons for increasing or reducing contract / temporary headcount

Reasons for increasing number of staff / hours worked in H1 2025



Reasons for reducing number of staff / hours worked in H1 2025



Section 2

Compensation and Increments



« I have lived on this earth long enough to conclude that the only time the average man is truly happy is during salary day. »

Unknown Author

In a dynamic job market, employee wages and inflation are closely linked. Wages heavily influence employment decisions, while inflation guides compensation strategies and salary increment estimates. Offering competitive compensation is essential for attracting and retaining top talent.

This section of our report examines the following questions:

- 1 What initiatives did businesses in SEA take to evaluate and enhance compensation and benefits?
- 2 How many companies awarded performance bonuses, and what were the payouts?
- 3 How many companies provided salary increments, and what were the increments?
- 4 How many staff promotions were granted, and what were the increments?



Initiatives to evaluate and enhance compensation and benefits

Employees will be glad to learn that **businesses stepped up in their efforts** in 2024 to evaluate compensation and benefits. Companies focused on ensuring competitive salary packages through pay guideline reviews, benefits benchmarking, and revising pay structures.

These **improvements were evident** across Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand. In Indonesia, employers prioritised benchmarking for both salaries and benefits, addressing areas of improvement rather than focusing solely on existing strengths.

Additionally, more employers began conducting employee engagement surveys to gauge employee sentiment, though there is still considerable room for further progress.

Initiatives undertaken by organisations to evaluate and enhance compensation and benefits

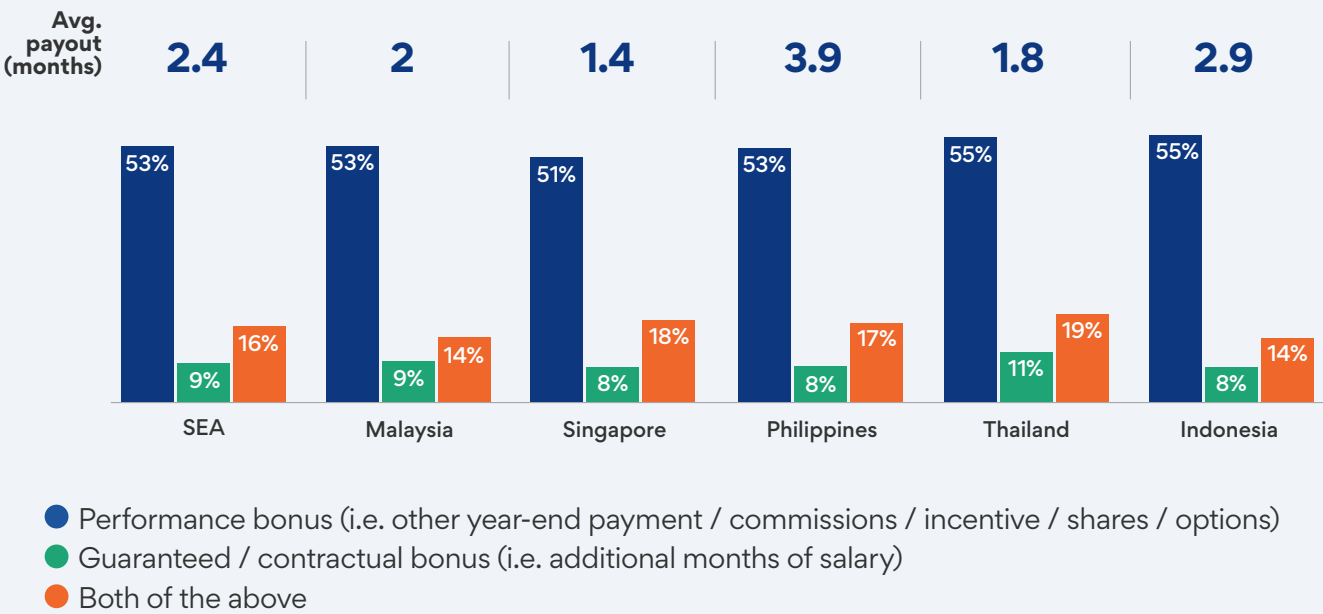
	SEA		Malaysia		Singapore		Philippines		Thailand		Indonesia	
	'23	'24	'23	'24	'23	'24	'23	'24	'23	'24	'23	'24
Salary benchmarking	52%	48%	59%	50%	52%	44%	58%	48%	56%	40%	36%	56%
Evaluate the company's pay guidelines / policies	33%	38%	29%	38%	27%	34%	34%	47%	32%	36%	42%	37%
Benefits benchmarking	22%	35%	25%	33%	17%	24%	23%	34%	28%	41%	16%	42%
Introduced / revised benefits	36%	34%	41%	39%	32%	32%	31%	33%	52%	40%	24%	24%
Develop / revise the company's pay structure	25%	33%	23%	32%	17%	23%	23%	33%	28%	43%	36%	35%
Factor inflation in calculation of increment	29%	31%	25%	32%	26%	33%	26%	33%	24%	25%	44%	35%
Conduct employee engagement surveys to find out sentiments	19%	26%	18%	26%	17%	20%	23%	31%	25%	30%	14%	20%

Performance bonuses in 2024

In 2024, 78% of companies **awarded bonuses**, with performance bonuses being the most common. The average bonus payout was 2.4 months' salary, led by the Philippines at 3.9 months, followed by Indonesia at 2.9 months.

Transparency in compensation also improved, as 65% of companies disclosed their bonus calculation methods, up from 60% the previous year. This growing openness helps foster stronger employer-employee relationships.

Types of bonuses provided and average payout in 2024



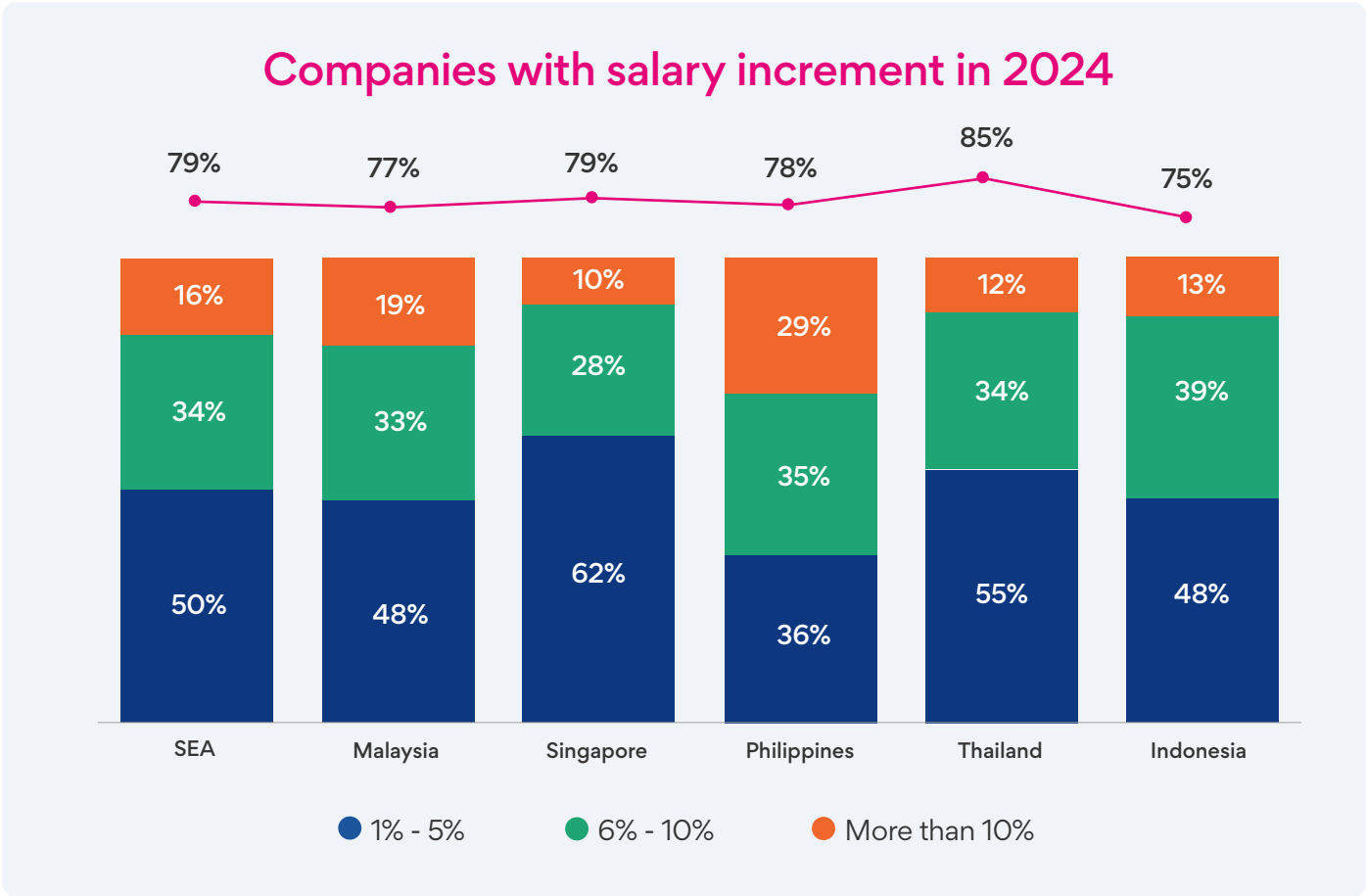
Did you know?

In 2024, 65% of companies shared how bonus payouts were calculated with their employees vs. 60% in 2023

Salary increases in 2024

79% of companies **awarded salary increases**, with Thailand leading at 85%, followed by Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, all at similar rates (77% to 79%).

Most companies provided increments of 1% to 5%, especially in Singapore and Thailand. However, a significant number of companies in the Philippines and Malaysia offered more generous increases, exceeding 10%.

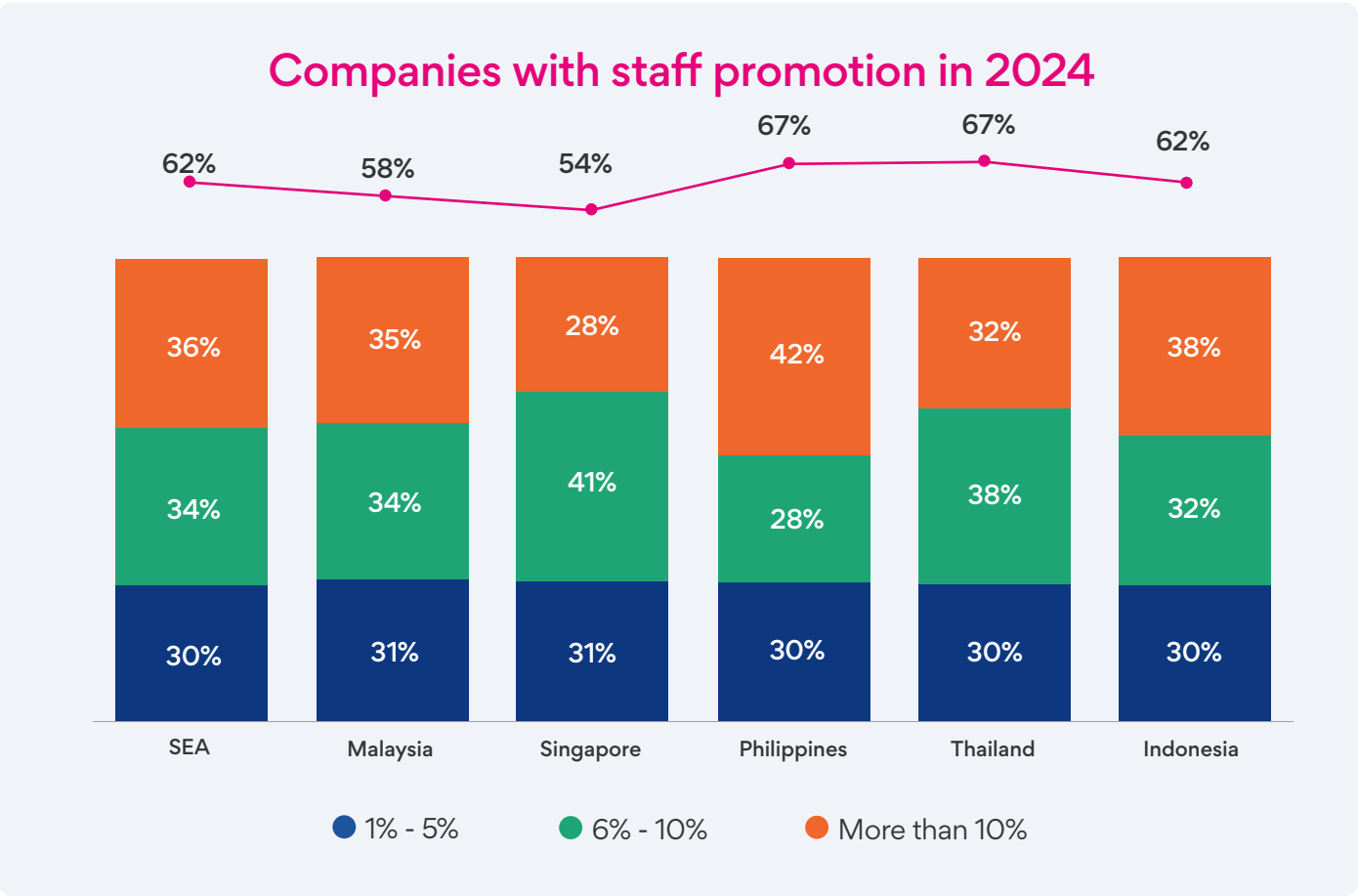


Staff promotions in 2024

62% of companies across Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines and Thailand, **awarded career advancement opportunities** to their employees.

Salary increments were fairly evenly distributed across the three ranges identified in our survey. However, Singapore saw a higher share of increments in the 6% to 10% range, while the Philippines had increases exceeding 10%.

A higher increment is a positive step toward motivating employees to stay with a company and pursue career growth. In turn, employers can benefit from having a strong workforce that drives business growth.



Section 3

Leave and General Benefits



“Happy employees ensure happy customers.
And happy customers ensure happy
shareholders, in that order.”
-Simon Sinek

Part 3 of the report focuses on leave and general benefits. Simon Sinek stresses that employee satisfaction is crucial for business success, noting that how management treats employees directly influences organisational performance, shaping outcomes for better or worse. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to continuously evolve their benefits to support employees and keep them motivated.

This section of our report addresses this question:

What types of benefits are trending in SEA and local markets (i.e. benefits that companies offered in 2024 or plan to offer in the next 12 months)?

- ✓ Special leave
- ✓ Financial benefits
- ✓ Career development programmes
- ✓ Accommodation benefits
- ✓ Work-life balance benefits
- ✓ Family-friendly benefits
- ✓ Others



Trending Special Leaves

The latest trend in special leaves **remains family-oriented**. Family care leave and additional parental leave are among the top three types of special leave prioritised by companies, reflecting their intent to better support employees with family responsibilities. This trend is consistent across most markets. However, in the Philippines, there is a stronger emphasis on leave types such as birthday, marriage, and compassionate leave.

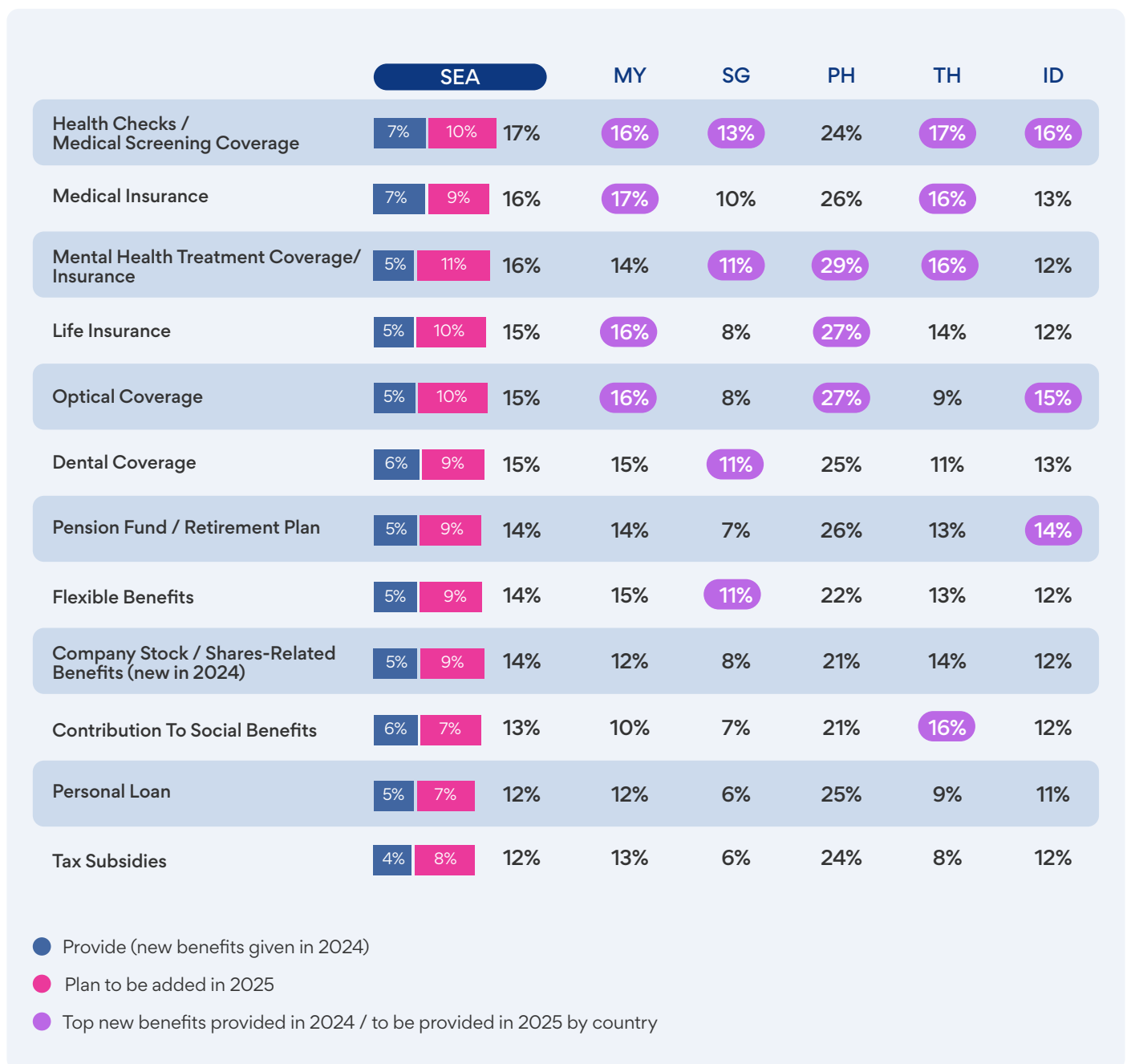
	SEA			MY	SG	PH	TH	ID
Family Care Leave	10%	7%	17%	15%	14%	26%	15%	14%
Additional Paternity Leave	7%	9%	16%	16%	16%	20%	15%	14%
Additional Maternity Leave	7%	9%	16%	16%	12%	20%	14%	17%
Birthday Leave	5%	10%	15%	14%	10%	24%	15%	8%
Compassionate Leave	7%	6%	13%	14%	8%	23%	11%	12%
Marriage Leave	8%	5%	13%	13%	9%	24%	12%	11%
Replacement Leave (new In 2024)	7%	6%	13%	16%	9%	21%	11%	11%
Flexible Leave (new In 2024)	7%	6%	13%	14%	11%	20%	12%	11%
Study / Examination Leave	5%	8%	13%	14%	9%	19%	11%	13%
Sabbatical Leave (new In 2024)	5%	8%	13%	14%	7%	21%	14%	13%
Community Service Leave	4%	9%	13%	13%	6%	21%	13%	12%
Graduation Leave	5%	7%	12%	12%	8%	20%	11%	12%
Menstrual Leave	4%	8%	12%	12%	6%	20%	9%	13%

- Provide (new benefits given in 2024)
- Plan to be added in 2025
- Top new benefits provided in 2024 / to be provided in 2025 by country

Trending Financial Benefits

Businesses in Southeast Asia are increasingly **prioritising employee health and protection**, with key trends including health checks and medical screening coverage, medical insurance, and mental health treatment coverage or insurance.

However, priorities vary slightly across the region. Malaysia and the Philippines placed greater emphasis on life insurance and optical coverage, while Indonesia focused more on pension funds.



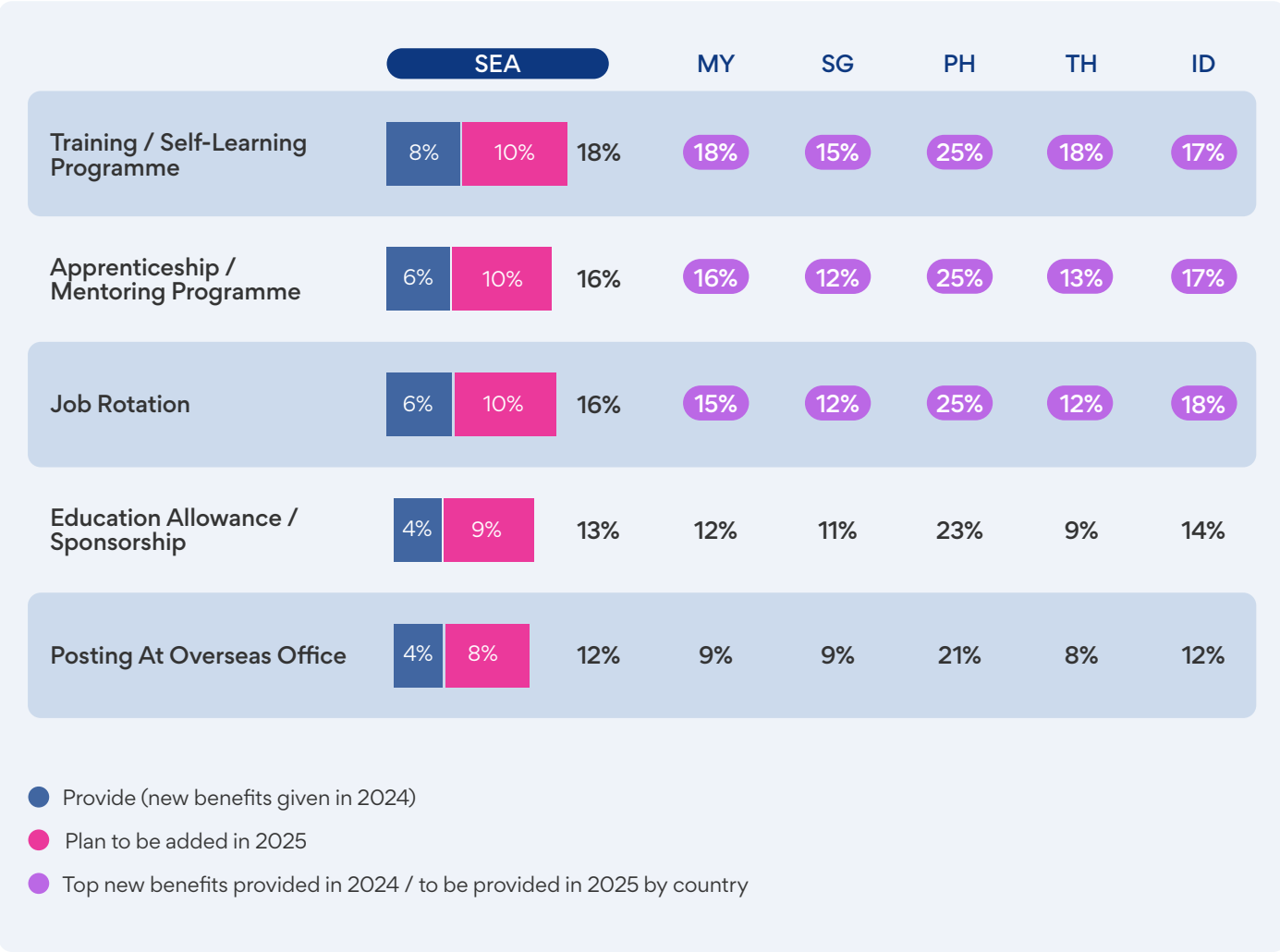
Trending Accommodation Benefits

Accommodation benefits are **not commonly offered** by companies in Southeast Asia, except in the Philippines, where there is a stronger emphasis on all four types of accommodation benefits. This trend may stem from the country's vast geographic spread and archipelagic nature, necessitating unique considerations for employee support.



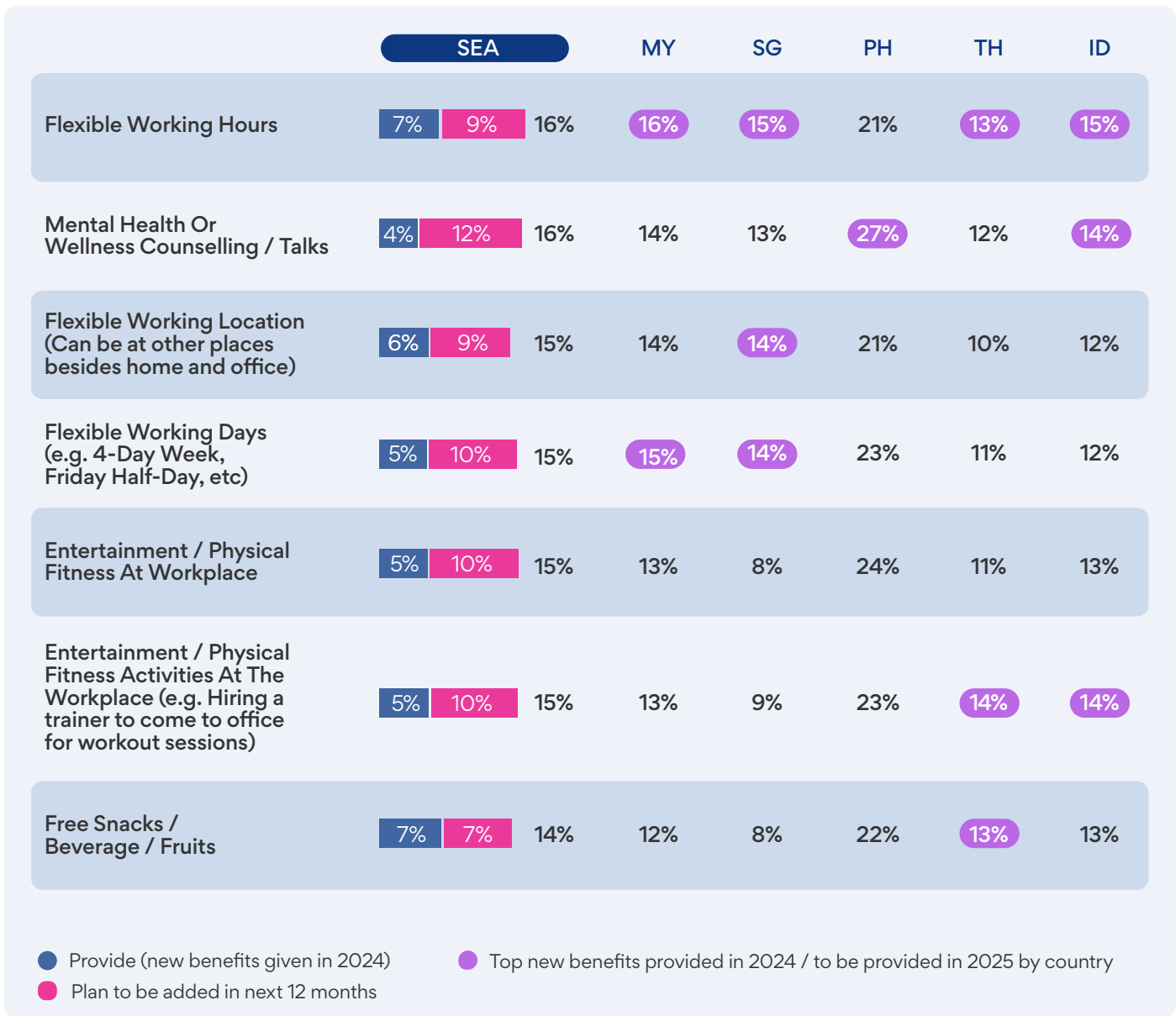
Trending Career Development Programmes

When it comes to upskilling, many companies in Southeast Asia **prioritise employee career development**. Employees can look forward to programmes such as training or self-learning opportunities, apprenticeships or mentoring initiatives, and job rotation schemes.



Trending Work-life Balance Benefits *(Part 1)*

The top trending work-life balance benefits focus on **flexibility and mental health support**. Flexible benefits include flexible working hours, locations, and days, while mental health benefits include wellness counseling or talks, as well as entertainment and physical fitness facilities at the workplace. The Philippines leads in mental health initiatives, emphasising benefits such as mental health days off, employee assistance programmes, and mental health app subscriptions. Meanwhile, Malaysia and Indonesia prioritise organisational activities like travel experiences and interest-based classes.



Leave & General Benefits

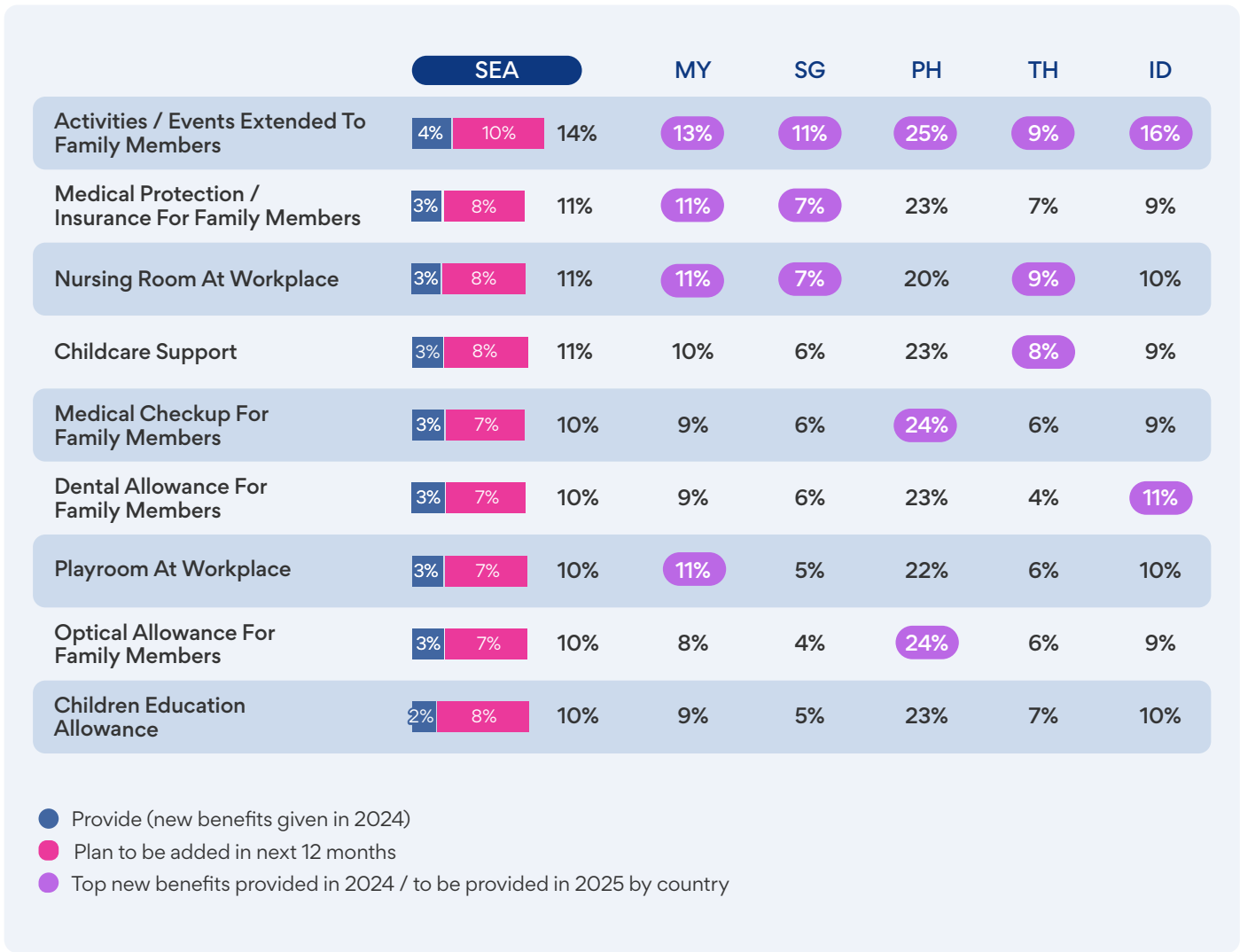
Trending Work-life Balance Benefits *(Part 2)*

	SEA			MY	SG	PH	TH	ID
Organisation Activities (Travelling, Interest Class)	5%	9%	14%	15%	10%	22%	10%	14%
Mental Health Day Off / MC	4%	10%	14%	11%	8%	27%	11%	13%
Employee Assistance Programme (Hotline / Communication / Consultation To Support Employees With Stress)	4%	10%	14%	13%	10%	25%	11%	14%
Free Meal (e.g. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)	5%	8%	13%	13%	8%	23%	11%	13%
Entertainment / Physical Fitness At Other Places	4%	9%	13%	12%	6%	23%	10%	13%
Gym Membership / Subsidised Membership	3%	10%	13%	12%	7%	23%	12%	12%
Mental Health App Subscriptions	3%	10%	13%	11%	8%	25%	13%	13%
Casual Wear Every Day	6%	6%	12%	13%	9%	18%	9%	12%
Early Leave On Festive Days	5%	7%	12%	11%	9%	20%	9%	12%
Sleeping Pods At Workplace	3%	8%	11%	11%	6%	21%	9%	9%

● Provide (new benefits given in 2024)
● Top new benefits provided in 2024 / to be provided in 2025 by country
● Plan to be added in next 12 months

Trending Family-Friendly Benefits

Trending family-focused benefits include activities or events extended to family members, medical protection or insurance for family members, and nursing rooms in the workplace. The Philippines shows a slightly different focus, emphasising medical check-ups and optical allowances for family members.



Trending Other Benefits

Transportation allowances for both international and domestic travel are among the most commonly offered benefits, followed by work phones and communication packages. These benefits are increasingly important for businesses requiring employees to travel locally or abroad to explore business opportunities. Other notable trends include the provision of company vehicles in the Philippines, free parking in Thailand, and internet or broadband allowances in Indonesia.

	SEA			MY	SG	PH	TH	ID
Transportation Allowance For Outside Country For Work	7%	6%	13%	14%	9%	21%	11%	12%
Transportation / Fuel / Toll Allowance for Travels in the Country	7%	5%	12%	12%	8%	18%	9%	11%
Work Phone And Connectivity Package	5%	6%	11%	13%	6%	20%	11%	9%
Company Vehicle	4%	7%	11%	11%	6%	22%	8%	9%
Free Parking at the Office Building	5%	5%	10%	11%	5%	18%	10%	9%
Internet / Broadband Allowance	4%	6%	10%	11%	4%	20%	6%	10%
Uniform Laundry Allowance	3%	7%	10%	10%	4%	20%	9%	8%

Provide (new benefits given in 2024) Plan to be added in next 12 months Top new benefits provided in 2024 / to be provided in 2025 by country

Section 4

AI in the Hiring Workplace



There was a time after the iPhone App Store launch where people talked about being a mobile company. But no software company says they're a mobile company now because it'd be unthinkable to not have a mobile app. And it'll be unthinkable not to have intelligence integrated into every product and service.

-Sam Altman, co-founder and CEO, Open AI

With AI dominating headlines over the past year, part 4 of our report focuses on AI in the hiring workplace. It examines whether businesses place importance on AI knowledge among candidates, or whether they leverage AI tools to help with the hiring process.

This section of our report looks into the following questions:

- 1 Is it important for candidates to have AI knowledge and how are they assessed?
- 2 Do companies use AI tools for recruitment and what do they use it for?
- 3 What are the reasons companies choose to adopt or reject AI tools?

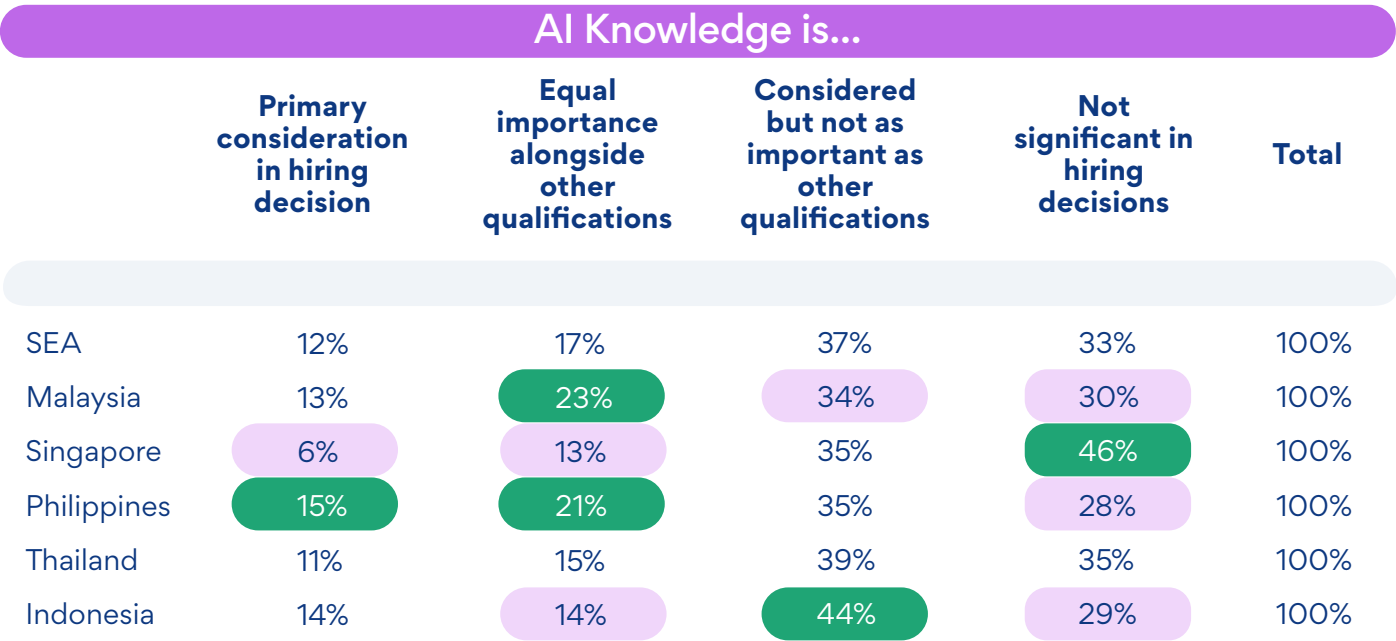


Importance of AI knowledge among candidates

With the rise of AI in recent years, 66% of companies across Southeast Asia (SEA) now **consider candidates' AI knowledge** during the hiring process. Among these, 29% regard AI knowledge as highly important, either as a primary consideration or on par with other qualifications. This emphasis on AI expertise is particularly notable in Malaysia and the Philippines.

These companies typically evaluate AI knowledge through candidate self-introductions, technical questions, or by reviewing projects and work samples included in the candidate's portfolio.

Importance of candidates having AI knowledge



● +3 or more p.p. vs. SEA ● -3 or more p.p. vs. SEA

Importance of AI knowledge among candidates

How companies assess a candidate's AI knowledge in SEA



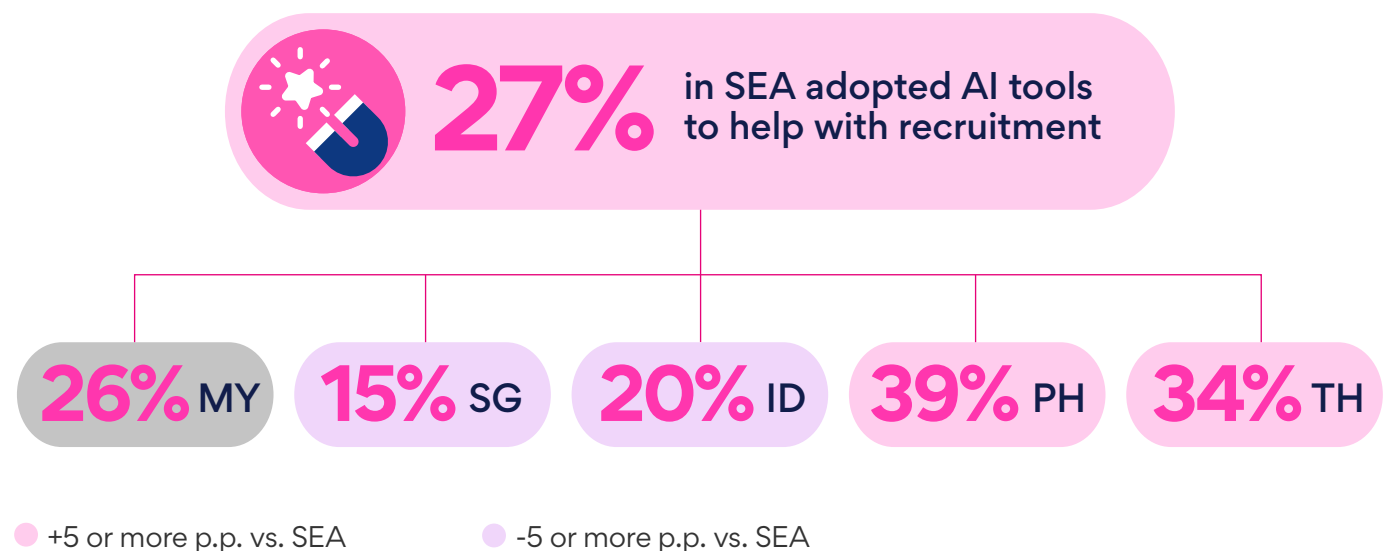
Usage of AI tools for recruitment, and reasons for using / not using

Given the growing importance of AI knowledge, it is unsurprising that some companies are **leveraging AI tools to identify and recruit suitable candidates**. Across Southeast Asia (SEA), 27% of employers reported using AI tools in their recruitment processes, with the adoption notably higher in the Philippines and Thailand, but lower in Singapore and Indonesia.

AI tools are primarily used to create job advertisements and refine language, generate comprehensive qualification requirements, and enhance professionalism. Additionally, AI tools are employed for candidate screening and assessment, including generating critical interview questions, conducting personality assessments, and creating scenario-based evaluations.

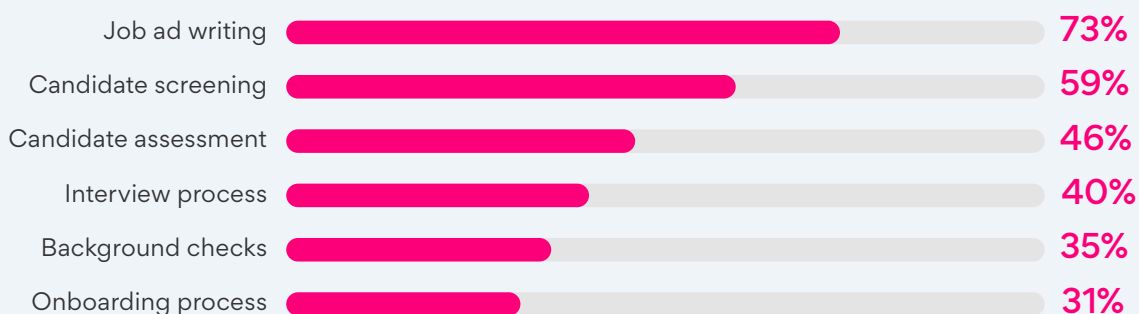
The 27% of employers who adopted AI tools in recruitment highlighted benefits such as improved hiring efficiency and speed, better job matching, and the automation of time-consuming tasks.

Meanwhile, 73% of employers have not adopted AI tools, citing reasons such as the perceived lack of human touch and personalisation, a belief that AI is unnecessary in the recruitment process, or a lack of knowledge or access to AI applications in recruitment.



Usage of AI tools for recruitment, and reasons for using / not using

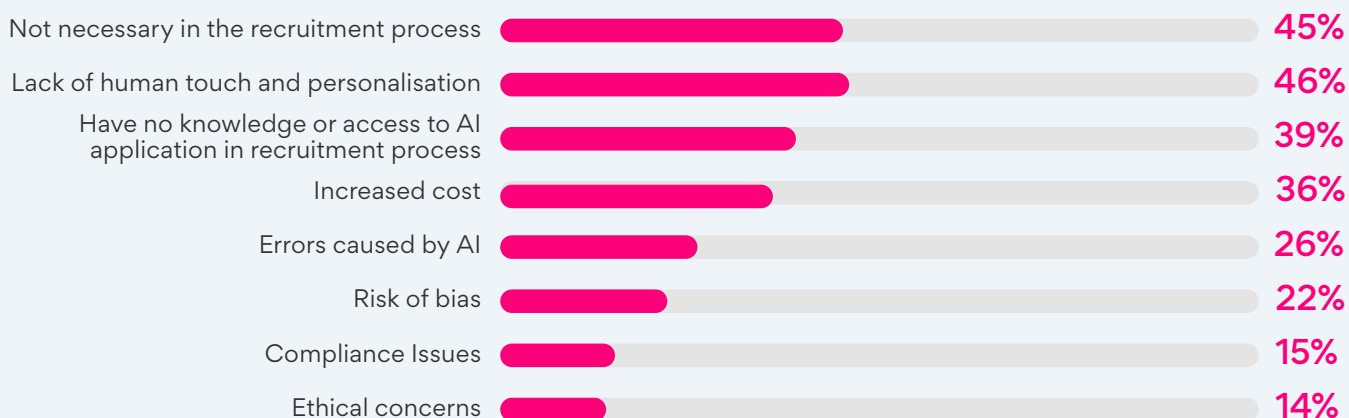
Employers in SEA used AI tools for...



27% in SEA adopted AI tools because...



73% in SEA did not adopt AI tools because...



Section 5

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at the workplace



If it's truly mission critical, if giving our employees the opportunity to express themselves, to be part of something, to make change, to lead the grassroots movement, then it has to be in the same category as everything else that we do that is mission critical.



-Jodie Wallis, Global Chief Analytics Officer,
Manulife Catalyst Honours, Toronto (7 Oct 2024)

The implementation of DEI in the workplace is still in its infancy in many Asian countries. The final part of this report explores DEI and provides ideas that we hope will encourage greater adoption by companies.

This section addresses the following questions:

- 1 What percentage of companies in SEA currently adopt DEI measures or initiatives?
- 2 What DEI measures or initiatives are being adopted?
- 3 What percentage are planning to adopt DEI measures or initiatives?
- 4 What percentage are not adopting DEI measures or initiatives?
- 5 What are the factors contributing to hesitancy or reluctance?
- 6 What types of fair hiring measures do companies employ?



DEI adoption and initiatives

Southeast Asia is a vibrant melting pot of diversity, shaped by unique local cultures and an influx of foreigners from regions such as India, China, and Europe. This rich diversity underscores the importance of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in workplaces, to foster an environment where **every voice is heard**. DEI refers to initiatives or policies designed to ensure individuals from various backgrounds feel welcomed and supported, allowing them to reach their full potential. Examples of diversity include culture, ethnicity, gender, and age.

Currently, approximately half of companies in the region have adopted DEI initiatives, while 18% of businesses do not plan to implement any in the next 12 months. Encouragingly, 2% of businesses plan to introduce DEI initiatives soon, and 28% are considering doing so within the next year.

The Philippines and Thailand lead in DEI adoption, likely driven by cultural factors and government policies protecting marginalised groups. Common DEI initiatives include implementing policies to address workplace discrimination and harassment, establishing employee resource groups or affinity networks, and providing unconscious bias training for employees.

Conversely Malaysia and Singapore lag behind in DEI implementation. Reasons include a perceived lack of benefits or return on investment (ROI). Additionally, DEI policies are not mandated by law in these countries, potentially discouraging adoption. A significant number of businesses in Malaysia and Singapore also highlight challenges such as limited knowledge or access to effective DEI strategies, best practices, and tools for ongoing progress tracking.

Initiatives to promote workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

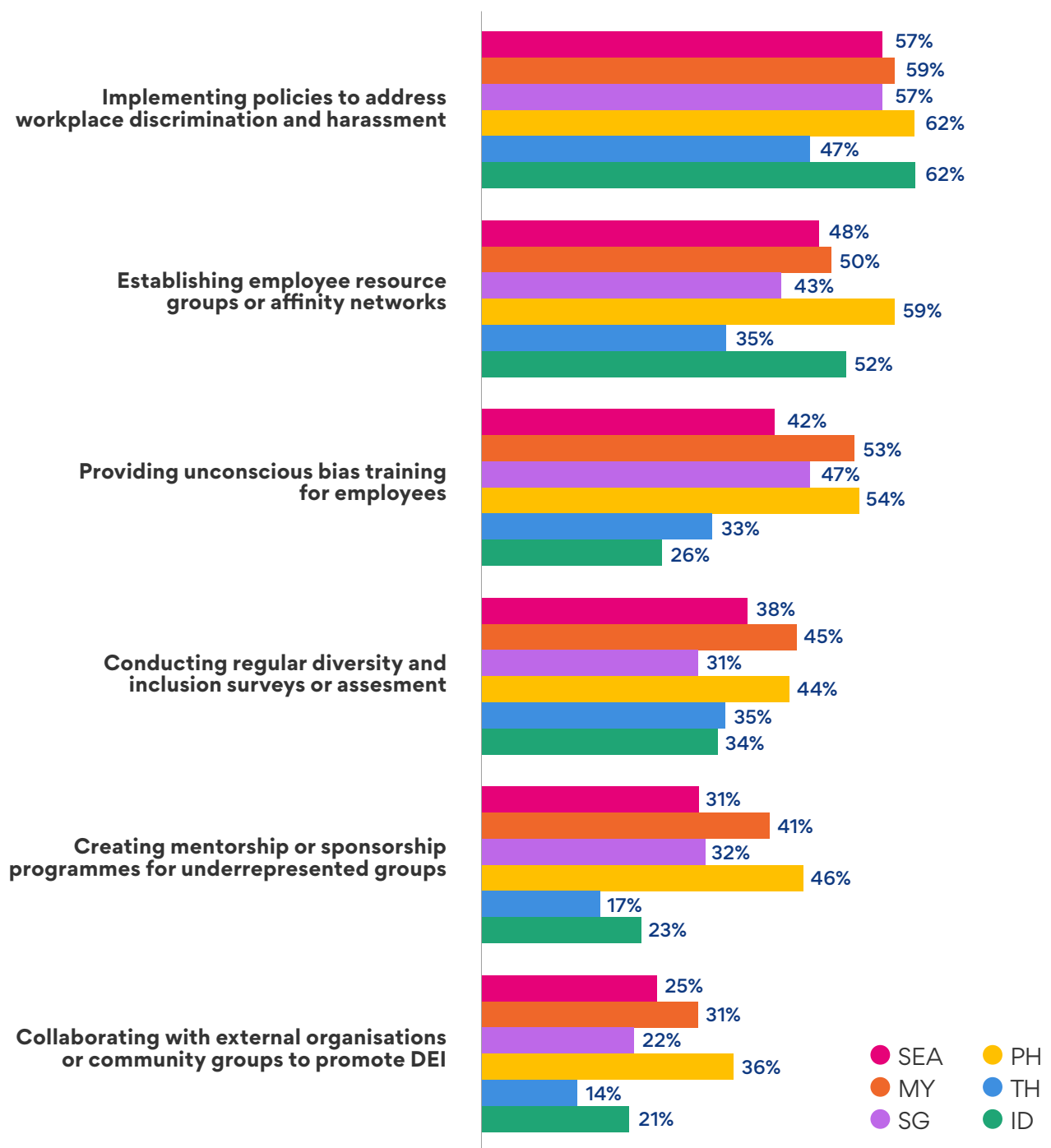
	SEA	MY	SG	PH	TH	ID
Currently adopted	52%	40%	42%	63%	58%	56%
Will adopt	2%	2%	1%	4%	3%	2%
May adopt in the next 12 months	28%	33%	32%	23%	25%	27%
Will not adopt	18%	25%	25%	10%	13%	15%

● +5 or more p.p. vs. SEA ● -5 or more p.p. vs. SEA

DEI adoption and initiatives

52% of organisations in SEA currently adopt initiatives to promote workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

DEI initiatives adopted by organisations

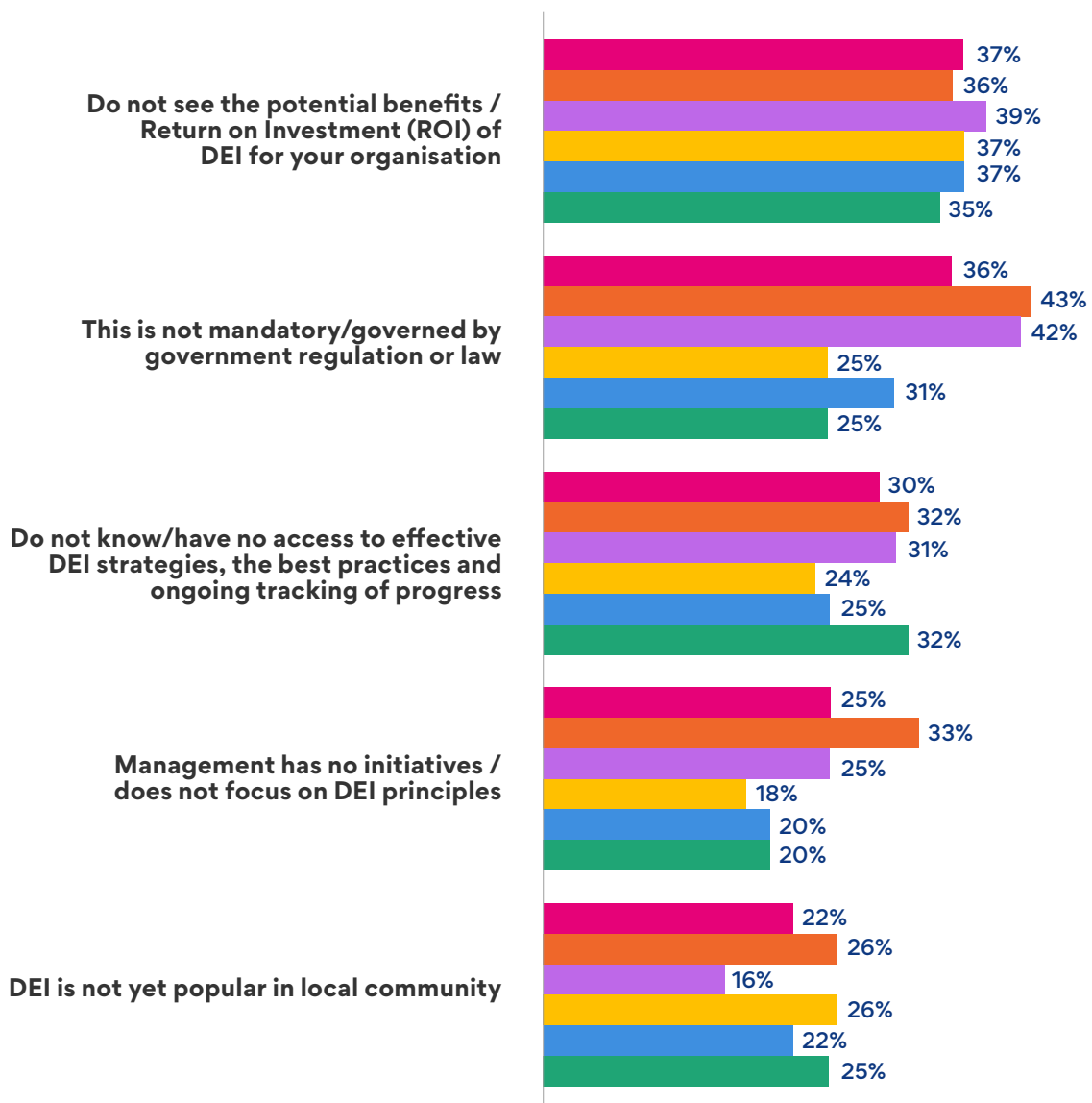


DEI adoption and initiatives

18%

will not adopt measures or initiatives to promote workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the next 12 months.

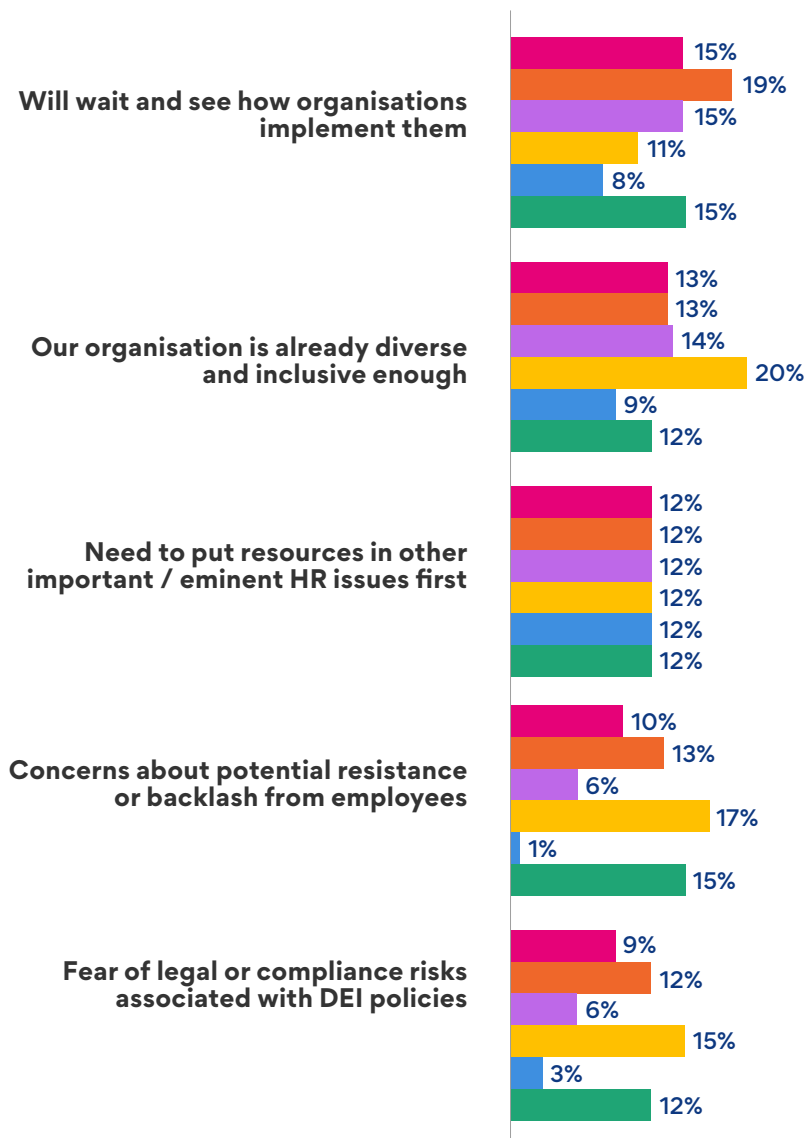
Hesitancy / reluctance factors (Part 1)



SEA PH
MY TH
SG ID

DEI adoption and initiatives

Hesitancy / reluctance factors (Part 2)



SEA MY SG PH TH ID



Fair hiring initiatives

When it comes to fair hiring practices, the top three initiatives commonly implemented by companies are:

- 1 **Establishing clear diversity and inclusion goals** or metrics for the hiring process.
- 2 **Conducting blind resume screenings** to minimise bias in the initial stages, by removing identifying details such as names, gender, and age.
- 3 **Assembling diverse hiring panels** to ensure a range of perspectives, including HR partners, senior managers, and employees from different departments.

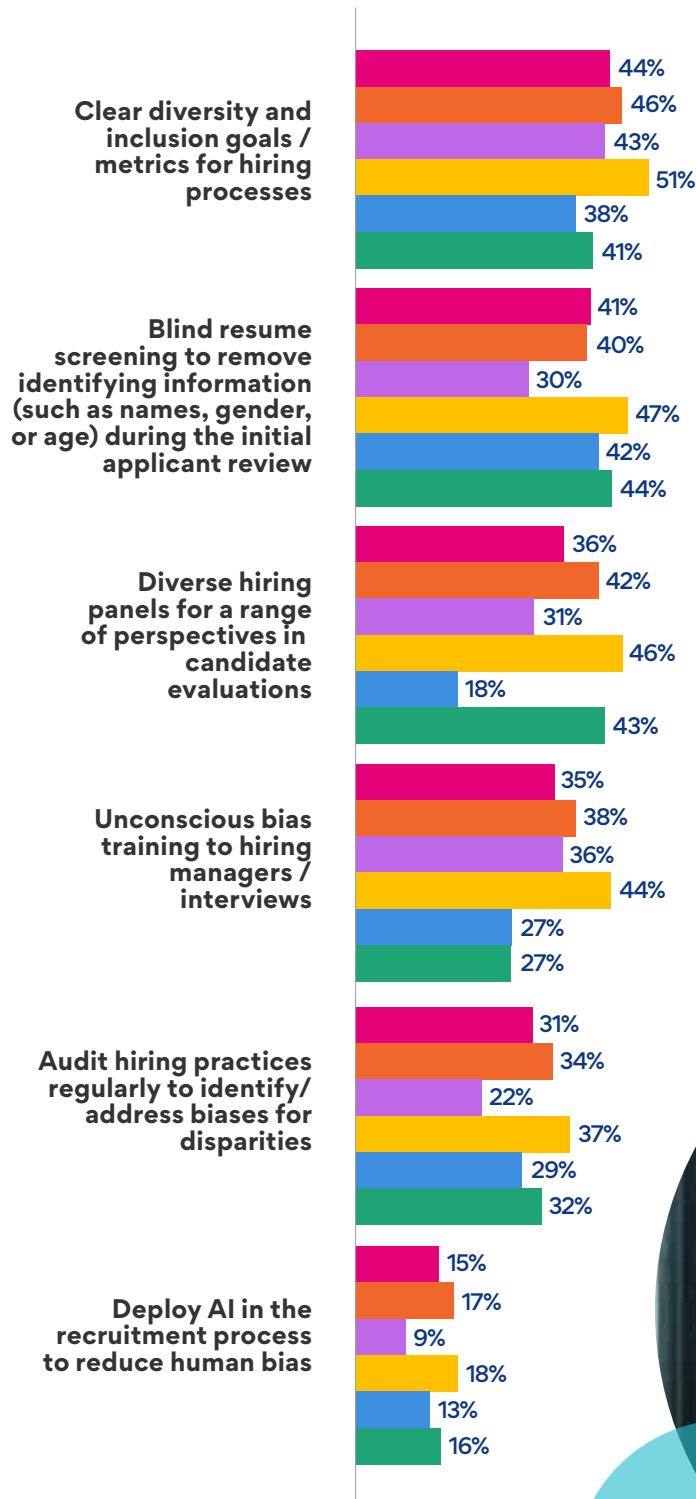
Filipino companies are at the forefront of these initiatives, leading in most areas. However, countries like Singapore and Thailand are trailing behind in key practices such as blind resume screening, diverse hiring panels, and unconscious bias training.

To further promote inclusivity, companies commonly review and update job descriptions regularly to eliminate bias. Many also use standardised templates across roles to maintain consistency and fairness in the hiring process.



Fair hiring initiatives

Fair hiring initiatives employed by companies

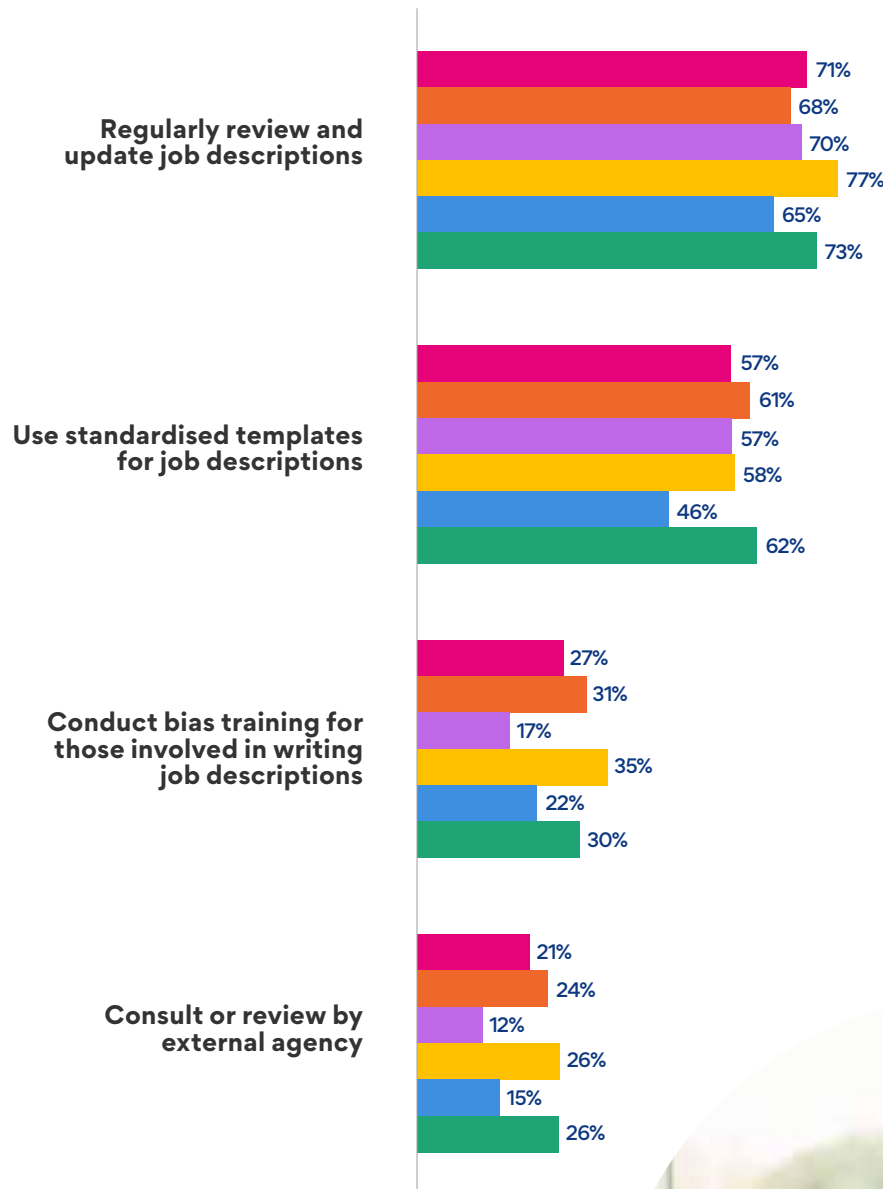


● SEA ● PH
● MY ● TH
● SG ● ID



Fair hiring initiatives

Efforts to ensure job descriptions are inclusive and free from bias



Conclusions and Recommendations



Key Insights: Southeast Asia

Strong 2024 and generally optimistic 2025 job market outlook in SEA, though not all countries shared the same optimism

Despite global economic uncertainties, Southeast Asia's job market remained resilient in 2024, with 68% of respondents describing it as active. The Philippines had the highest activity levels, while Singapore and Thailand reported lower levels of activity. Optimism for 2025 remains strong, with 36% of respondents anticipating increased job market activity in the first half of the year.

Hiring trends in 2024 were robust, with 93% of companies recruiting, particularly for permanent part-time roles. Thailand led with 96% of companies hiring, while the Philippines and Indonesia focused on hiring temporary employees. However, 34% of companies reduced their workforce, especially in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Looking ahead to 2025, 50% of companies plan to expand their permanent workforce, with the Philippines leading the trend. Additionally, the reliance on contract or temporary workers is expected to grow, particularly in the Philippines, where 46% of companies plan to hire more temporary staff.

More initiatives to improve compensation, with about 8 out of 10 companies awarding bonuses and salary increments

In 2024, companies across Southeast Asia focused on enhancing compensation and benefits. Efforts included reviewing pay guidelines, benchmarking benefits, and revising pay structures, with notable improvements in Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand. In Indonesia, employers focused on benchmarking salaries and benefits to address areas requiring improvement.

78% of companies awarded bonuses, with an average payout equivalent to 2.4 months' salary. The Philippines led with 3.9 months, followed by Indonesia at 2.9 months. Transparency also improved, as 65% of companies shared their bonus calculation methods.



Conclusion & Recommendations

Key Insights: Southeast Asia

79% of companies awarded salary increments, with Thailand leading at 85%. Most increments were between 1% and 5%, but the Philippines and Malaysia offered more generous increments, over 10% respectively. Additionally, 62% of companies provided career advancement opportunities, particularly in the Philippines and Thailand.

Consistent trends in benefits, with a stronger focus on employees' family and health, except in a few countries

Family-oriented special leave, including family care and parental leave, is trending across Southeast Asia, with the Philippines focusing more on birthday, marriage, and compassionate leave. Companies are also prioritising employees' health through medical insurance, health checks, and mental health coverage, with regional differences in benefits such as life insurance in Malaysia and optical coverage in the Philippines.

Upskilling programmes such as training, apprenticeships, and job rotation are a priority. Work-life balance benefits emphasise flexibility and mental health support, with the Philippines leading in mental health initiatives. Family-friendly benefits include events, medical protection, and nursing rooms, particularly in the Philippines. Additionally, transportation allowances and work-related benefits, such as company vehicles in the Philippines and internet allowances in Indonesia are gaining traction.



Conclusion & Recommendations

Key Insights: Southeast Asia

AI knowledge is gaining importance in Southeast Asia's hiring processes

In Southeast Asia, 66% of companies now consider AI knowledge during hiring, with 29% ranking it as a top priority, especially in Malaysia and the Philippines. AI knowledge is evaluated through self-introductions, technical questions, or portfolio reviews. 27% of companies leverage AI tools for recruitment, particularly in the Philippines and Thailand. These tools assist with tasks like creating job advertisements, refining language, and screening candidates through interview questions, personality assessments, and scenario-based assessments.

The benefits of AI adoption include faster hiring, better job matching, and automation of time-saving tasks. However, 73% of companies have yet to adopt AI, due to concerns about lack of personalisation, perceived irrelevance, or limited access to AI resources.



Conclusion & Recommendations

Key Insights: Southeast Asia

High DEI adoption in some countries, while others face challenges

Southeast Asia's cultural diversity underscores the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in workplaces to ensure every voice is heard. DEI initiatives aim to create welcoming and supportive environments for individuals from varied backgrounds.

Currently, about half of companies in the region have adopted DEI strategies, with 28% considering implementation soon. The Philippines and Thailand lead in DEI adoption, driven by their cultural values and government policies. Conversely, Malaysia and Singapore lag due to perceived lack of return on investment (ROI) and legal mandates.

In terms of fair hiring practices, key initiatives include setting diversity goals, conducting blind resume screenings, and assembling diverse hiring panels. Filipino companies lead these efforts, while some countries like Singapore and Thailand continue to face challenges in implementing these practices. Many companies are also reviewing and standardising job descriptions to ensure fairness in recruitment processes.



Conclusion & Recommendations

Recommendations

As of the writing of this report, several countries have recently been unveiled their Budget 2025. Businesses and hirers are encouraged to review its details when planning for 2025.



1. Seize the opportunity to recruit top talent in 2025

Given the strong confidence in the job market in H1, businesses should continue seeking talent to bolster their workforce. Businesses that were previously focused on hiring only full-time employees might consider exploring part-time, contractual, or temporary employees. As highlighted in this report, a flexible workforce offers numerous benefits.



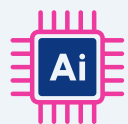
2. Offer competitive increments to motivate employees

SEEK recently unveiled Talent Attraction Lab for all 8 countries, a separate study that focuses on employee motivations across various industries and demographics. The study reveals that compensation is the top driver for attracting and retaining employees. It is critical for businesses to factor in inflation, industry benchmarks, and company performance to determine competitive salary increments.



3. Enhance benefits packages by introducing popular offerings

Employee benefits continue to evolve, and while many remained the same as last year, new and emerging options are gaining popularity. To attract and retain top talent, consider offering the most sought-after benefits highlighted in the leave and general benefits section of this report.



4. Prioritise talent with AI knowledge in the right industries

Insights from SEEK's 'Decoding Global Talent 2024: Work Preferences in the Age of AI' reveal that the adoption of AI amongst talent is substantial, with 44% of talent already using AI tools monthly and it rightly matches business expectations. Hence, hirers should look for talent with AI knowledge and equip themselves with AI tools for recruitment. Businesses can also leverage government initiatives such as Indonesia's National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (Strategi Nasional Kecerdasan Artifisial) or the Philippines' ICT/AI R&D Roadmap (2020 – 2024). There are also training programmes to improve the AI competence of workforces, such as Malaysia's Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp), and Singapore's Learn AI.



5. Begin implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies

Southeast Asia is home to people from diverse backgrounds, culture, and nationalities outside the region. Each country has policies being enacted to enforce DEI, such as the Philippines' Anti-Age Discrimination Act and the upcoming to-be-tabled Workplace Fairness Legislation (WFL) in Singapore. Countries may also offer incentives, such as Malaysia's Budget 2025 which includes tax incentives for measures like additional paid leave for caring for children or ill / disabled family members, or hiring women returning to the workforce. There are also NGOs that can assist with DEI adoption, such as the highly successful American Chamber of Commerce Thailand (AMCHAM), and the British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT) in Thailand.

Source:

Talent Attraction Lab: <https://my.employer.seek.com/market-insights/talent-attraction-lab>

Decoding Global Talent 2024: Shifting work preferences in the age of AI:
<https://my.employer.seek.com/market-insights/decoding-global-talent-ai-2024>



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