

Decoding Global Talent 2024

GenAI Edition

Shifting work
preferences in
the age of GenAI



 **Malaysia**

Table of Contents

Introduction | 1 - 5

- About the Study
- Demographics: Global
- Demographics: Malaysia

Global Shifts in Ways of Working | 6 - 15

- Key Insights: Global
- Adoption & Impact - GenAI
- Personal & Work Use-case
- GenAI User Personas
- Willingness to Reskill
- Ideal Career Path
- Dealbreakers

GenAI's Impact in Malaysia | 16 - 23

- Use of GenAI in Malaysia
- Adoption Across Professions
- Impact of GenAI
- GenAI Work/Personal Uses
- End Uses of GenAI
- Roadblocks in using GenAI
- GenAI User Personas

Reskilling and Learning in Malaysia | 24 - 28

- Willingness to Reskill
- Skills Improvement
- Learning & Development
- Time Spent and Preferences

Work Preferences in Malaysia | 29 - 32

- Ideal Career Path
- Work Preferences
- Dealbreakers for Malaysians

Conclusion & Recommendations | 33 - 41

- Key Insights: Malaysia
- Recommendations for Malaysian Employers

Introduction

About the Study

How do talent perceive and use emerging GenAI technologies? How can employers attract, retain and reskill top talent?

We are proud to share with you the latest edition of the world's largest survey on ideal jobs and shifting priorities in the age of GenAI. Part of the Global Talent Survey series (ongoing since 2014), this report delves into the workforce's changing preferences, the impact of GenAI, and strategies for mitigating its effects. GenAI, short for Generative AI, is a type of Artificial Intelligence designed to create new content such as text, images and other forms of output by learning patterns from existing data.

This quantitative research is conducted in collaboration with BCG, The Network and the Stepstone Group. Survey links are sent to our talent across 6 countries via email where their feedback is collected and collated to produce the insights in this report.

We present this to you as part of our ongoing commitment as your No.1 Trusted Talent Partner in Asia. These results have deep actionable insights for your market that will enable you to better connect talent to **#BetterMatches**.

How these findings help you:

- ✓ Discover the motivations and needs of talent to keep them competitive
- ✓ Understand the factors to consider to retain talent
- ✓ Know what you need to offer to attract highly-skilled talent

Disclaimer: In some occurrences in this report, it is possible that percentages do not add up to or exceed 100% as a result of rounding of numeral fractions.

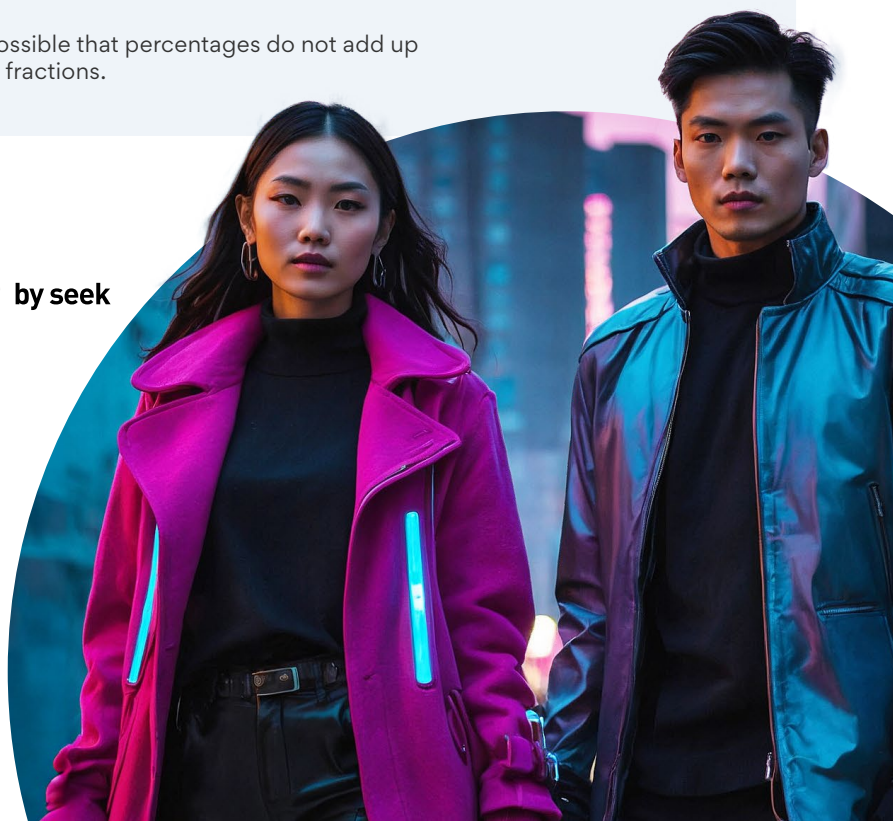
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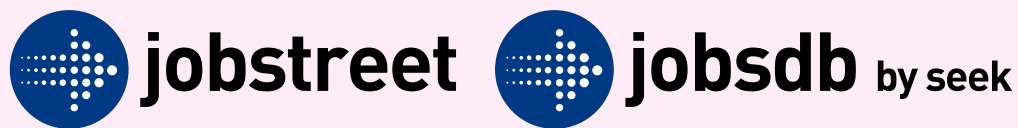
In partnership with:



Source: 2023 BCG/The Network/Stepstone Group proprietary web survey and analysis.



About the Study



Jobstreet and Jobsdb are the leading employment platforms in Southeast Asia, helping people live more fulfilling and productive working lives and helping organisations succeed. They are a subsidiary of SEEK, a diverse group of companies comprised of a strong portfolio of online employment, educational, commercial and volunteer businesses. SEEK is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange and has a strong presence across the APAC region, including six Asian markets – Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand – through the Jobstreet and Jobsdb brands. SEEK attracts over 500 million visits a year in Asia.



Boston Consulting Group partners with leaders in business and society to tackle their most important challenges and capture their greatest opportunities. BCG was the pioneer in business strategy when it was founded in 1963. Today, it helps clients with total transformation—inspiring complex change, enabling organisations to grow, building competitive advantage, and driving bottom-line impact.



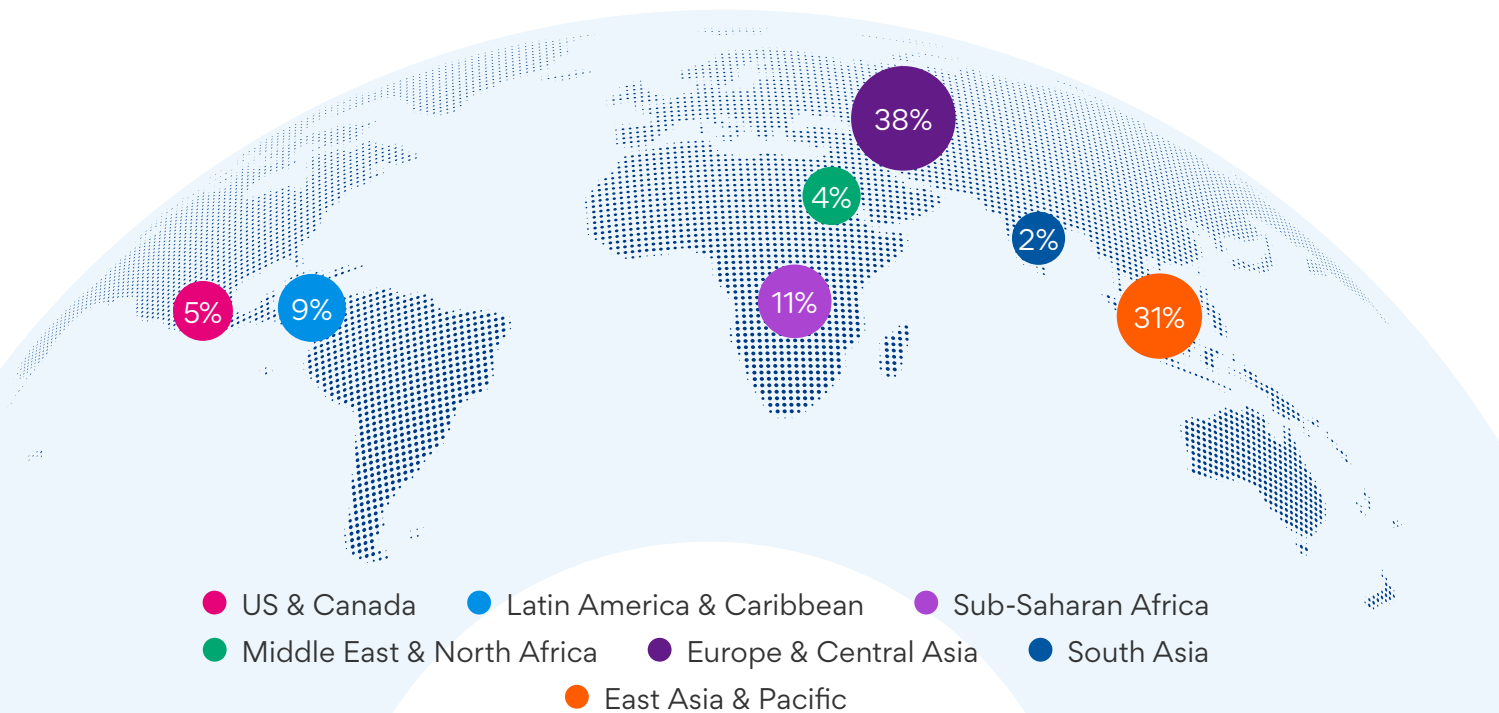
The Network is a global alliance of more than 60 leading recruitment websites, committed to finding the best talent in over 130 countries. Founded in 2002, The Network has become the global leader in online recruitment, serving more than 2,000 global corporations. It offers these corporations a single point of contact in their home countries, and allow them to work in a single currency and with a single contract—while giving them access to a global workforce. The recruitment websites in The Network attract almost 200 million unique visitors each month. For more information, please visit www.the-network.com.

Demographics: Global

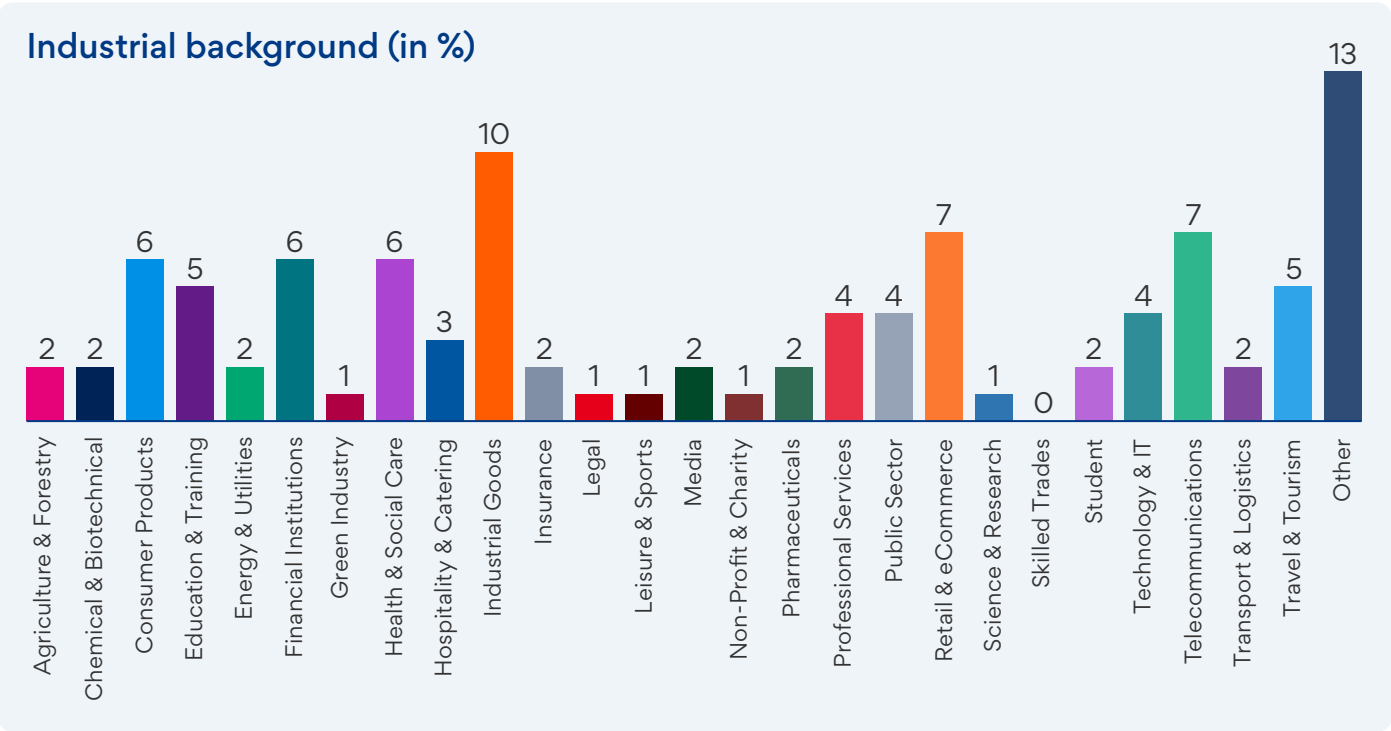
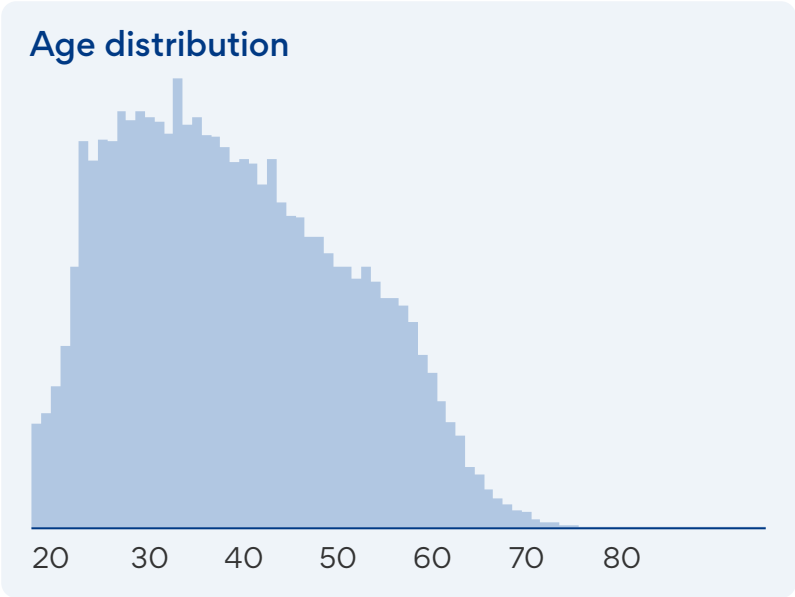
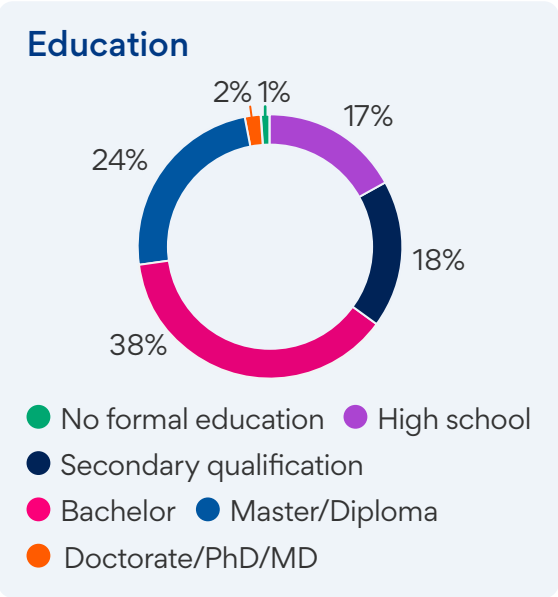
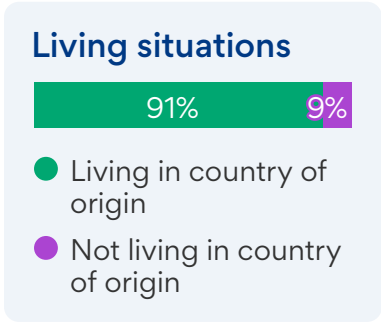
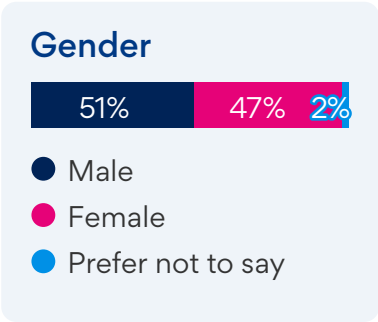
150,735
respondents

180+
countries

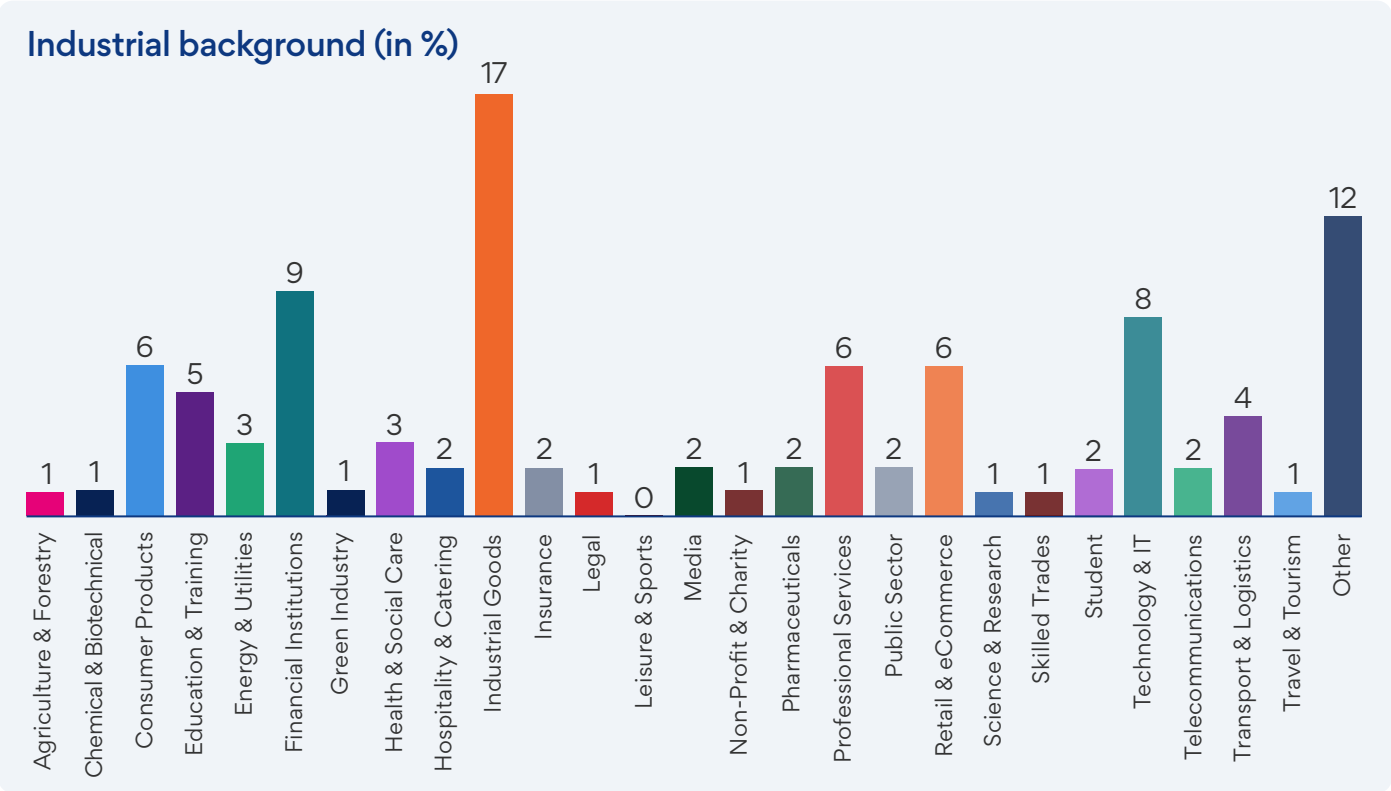
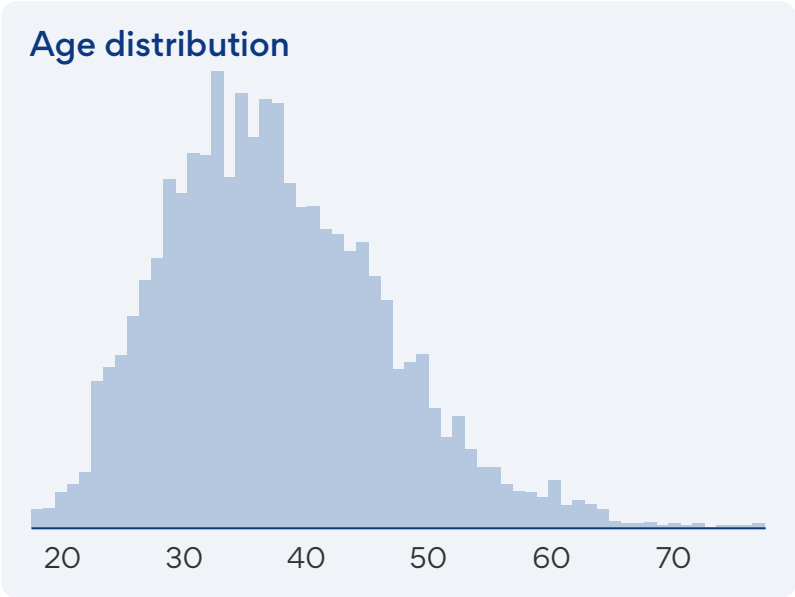
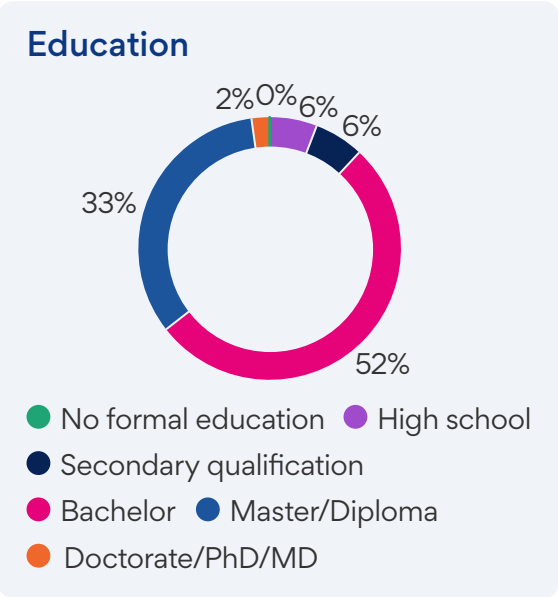
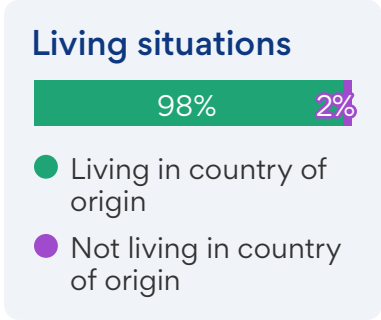
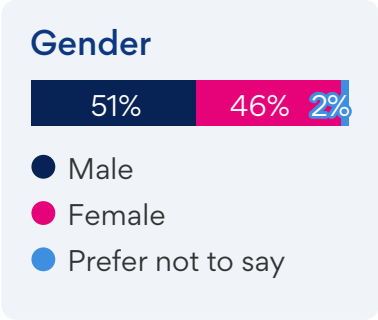
The global results are based on a large, diverse sample covering most major talent markets.



Demographics: Global



Demographics: Malaysia

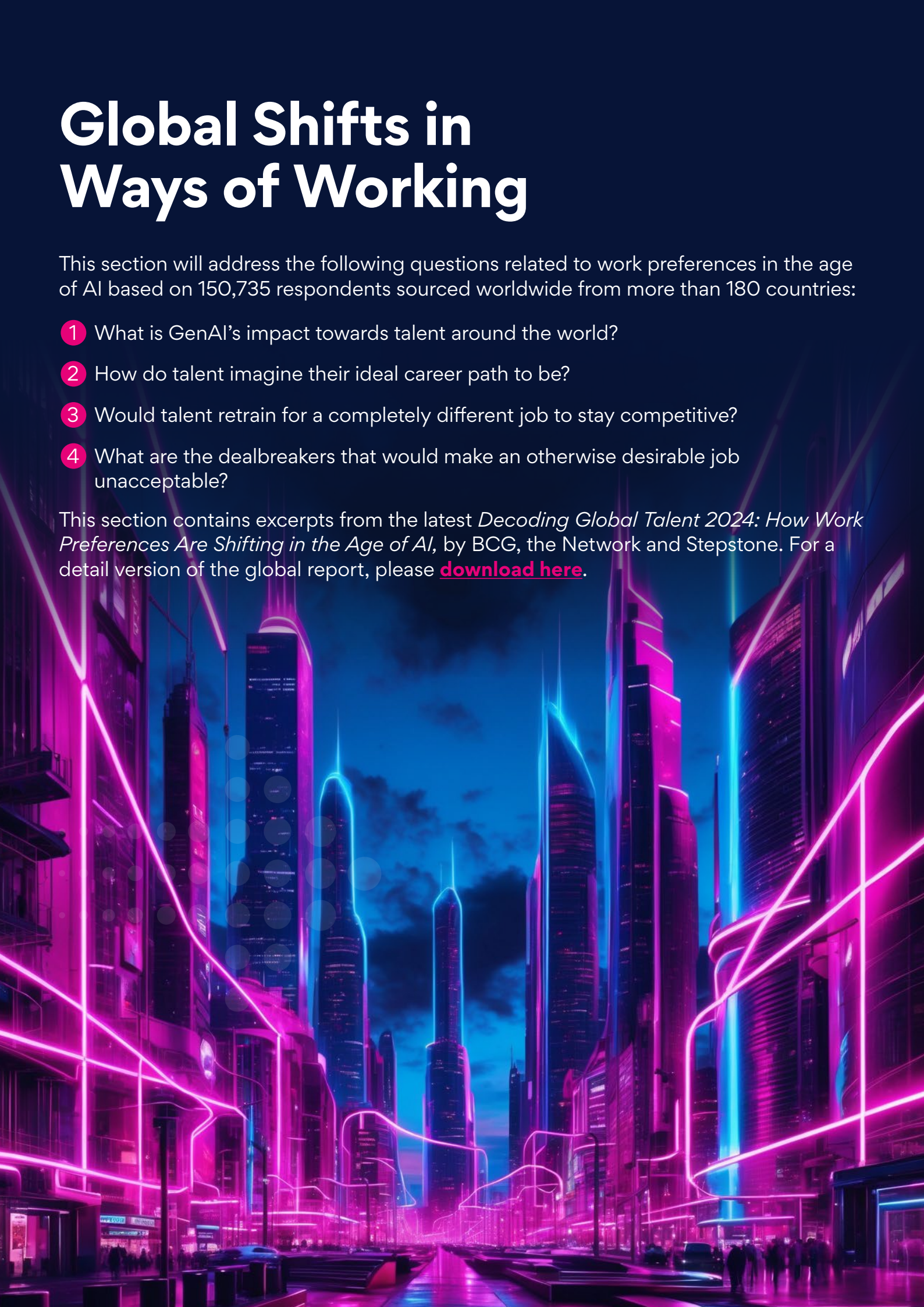


Global Shifts in Ways of Working

This section will address the following questions related to work preferences in the age of AI based on 150,735 respondents sourced worldwide from more than 180 countries:

- 1 What is GenAI's impact towards talent around the world?
- 2 How do talent imagine their ideal career path to be?
- 3 Would talent retrain for a completely different job to stay competitive?
- 4 What are the dealbreakers that would make an otherwise desirable job unacceptable?

This section contains excerpts from the latest *Decoding Global Talent 2024: How Work Preferences Are Shifting in the Age of AI*, by BCG, the Network and Stepstone. For a detail version of the global report, please [download here](#).



Key Insights: Global

Generative AI (GenAI) is revolutionising workplace dynamics, becoming a cornerstone of innovation and reshaping how people work and envision their futures. As GenAI continues to influence the work environment, the values and skills prioritised by employees – especially those of younger generations – are also evolving. Our comprehensive survey of 150,735 respondents from over 180 countries delves into these emerging trends.



Navigating the GenAI revolution: opportunities and challenges in the workplace

GenAI is a driving force for progress and innovation, reshaping work environments in significant ways. It elicits mixed reactions; while some celebrate its potential to boost productivity and creativity, others are sceptical, fearing job displacement and questioning its reliability. Despite these concerns, workers are increasingly integrating AI into their routines. Over 50% of respondents have experimented with GenAI recently, and around 39% use it frequently for their jobs or personal tasks.

The impact of GenAI on jobs varies across sectors. Workers in IT & Technology as well as marketing are the most likely to use it, while those in manual labour and social services show lower adoption rates. While GenAI is used for both professional and personal purposes, trust in its output remains cautious. Only about 10% of respondents fully trust its use, 40% thoroughly review its outputs before use, and approximately 30% rely on it for initial ideas only.

As GenAI continues to evolve, 50% of workers anticipate the need for upskilling, and 21% foresee significant job transformations requiring extensive new skills. In response, 57% of workers are open to retraining to stay competitive. Despite these changes, only 5% are worried about their jobs completely disappearing due to GenAI.

Ideal career path and dealbreakers

Across the globe, people's career aspirations share common themes. A significant 60% of respondents envision their ideal career as one offering stability and healthy work-life balance. Meanwhile, 55% aim to join prestigious companies, aspiring for future leadership roles. However, only about one-third are adventurous, seeking to explore new professions.

The recruiting experience and a company's brand profoundly impact workers' decisions to join. Negative recruitment experiences and a lack of focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are major dealbreakers. Ideal career paths today are defined by a blend of work-life balance and opportunities for advancement, with younger workers prioritising growth and older workers seeking balance.

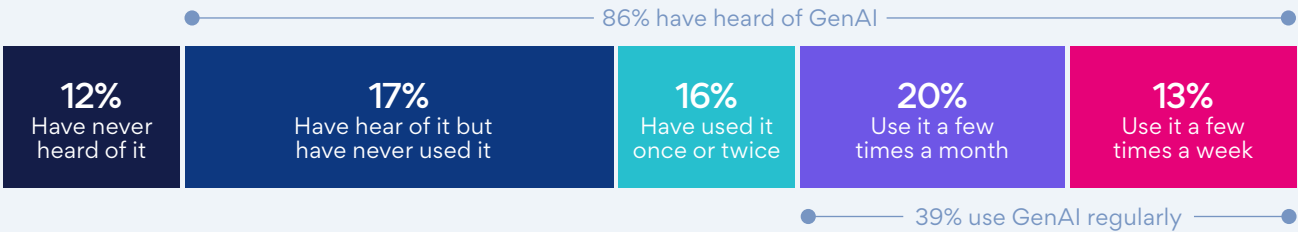
Adoption & Impact - GenAI

Are global talent using GenAI?

An exceptionally large share of talent (86%) said that they have heard about GenAI. Usage, whether for work or for personal activities, is impressive as well: more than 50% said that they have experimented with it at least once recently, including about 39% who we define as regular users—they use it either a few times a month (21%) or several times a week (18%).

Although most demographic factors (such as education and gender) have little impact on the likelihood of using GenAI, age does play a role. Those who are 30 or younger have the highest adoption rates, and 49% of them use GenAI regularly. In contrast, talent older than 50 are much less likely to use GenAI regularly. Job-related factors play a role as well. Digital and IT talent are the most likely to be regular users of GenAI, followed by those in marketing, media, and design job roles.

Respondents' awareness and use of GenAI are high



Regular use of GenAI varies by age, industry, and job

Respondents who use GenAI regularly

By age group	By industry	By job role
≤20	Technology and IT	Digitalisation, data science, and AI
21-30	Media	IT
31-40	Science and research	Marketing and media
41-50	Green industry and sustainability	Design, art, creative professions, and architecture
51-60	Education and training	Business management
>60		

Adoption & Impact - GenAI

How does global talent plan to stay competitive in the age of GenAI?

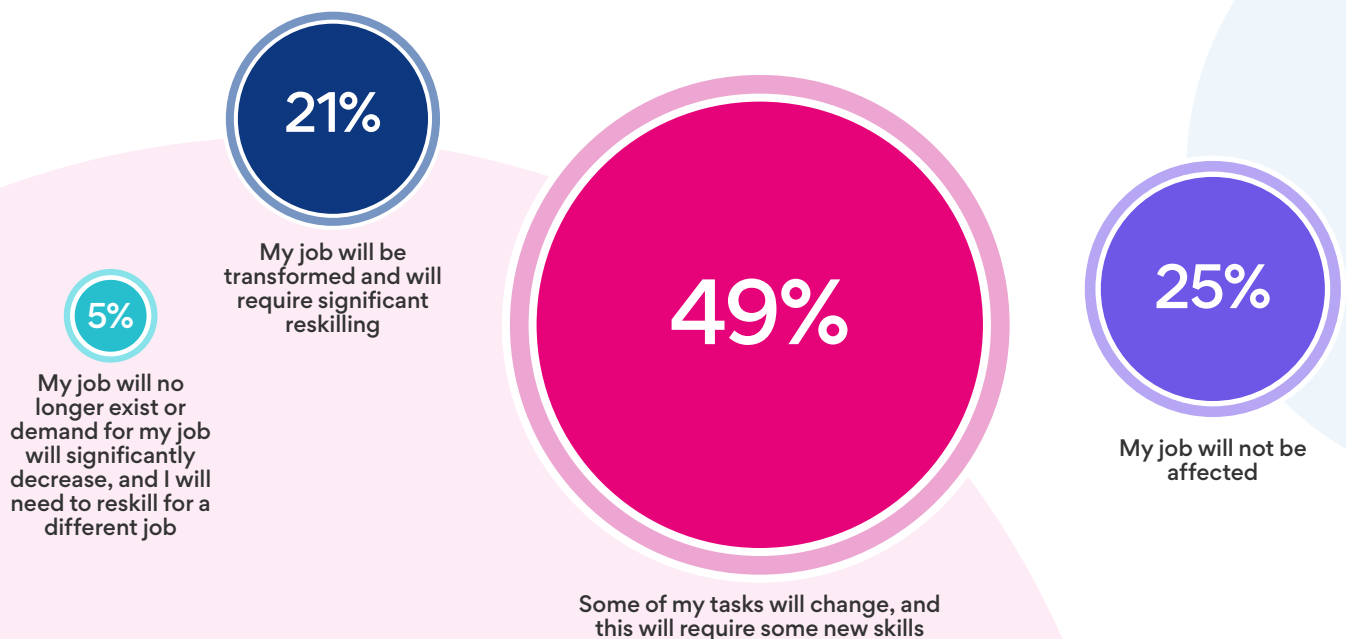
In general, talent who use GenAI feel that it benefits them at work, in their personal lives, or both. This highlights exciting opportunities for new job creation and the evolution of traditional roles, encouraging a dynamic integration of technology and talent.

The good news is that most talent do not consider GenAI as a significant threat to their livelihood. Most talent aren't terribly worried about AI pushing them out of their jobs: only 5% believe that their roles will become obsolete.

But they don't view the situation through rose-coloured glasses, either. Most anticipate that certain aspects of their jobs will change, requiring them to develop new skills. Only about a quarter think that GenAI will not affect their jobs at all.

Global talent is aware but unafraid of technological disruption

How respondents expect GenAI to impact their job in the future



Personal & Work Use-case

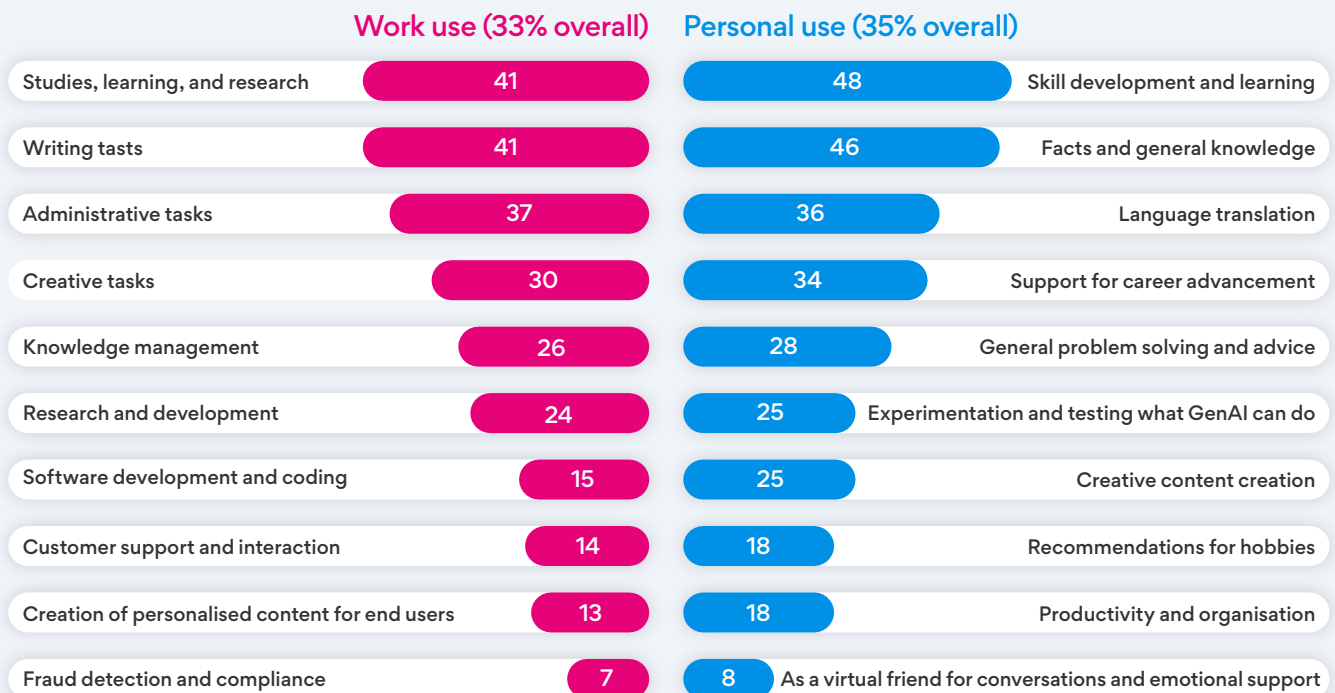
What do talent use GenAI for?

Most talent who regularly use GenAI do so both for work and for personal pursuits. Most use it for simple activities such as research, administration, and translation - usage that is akin to replacing Google with GenAI. Overall, 33% use GenAI regularly at work. Those in office-based, management, and administrative jobs are most likely to do so, to accomplish administrative and writing tasks more quickly. A fair share of IT professionals use GenAI for coding (36%), and many marketing specialists (41%) and design professionals (47%) use it for creative tasks. Evidently, talent who use GenAI most frequently are now leveraging it for their core work tasks, not just for general administrative work and research.

Personal GenAI applications most often focus on developing skills and learning (48%), finding facts and gaining general knowledge (46%), or translating material from other languages (36%). People also turn to GenAI to support their career advancement goals and job searches, using it to develop résumés and cover letters, for example.

Respondents most often use GenAI for information, writing, and administrative work

Respondents who use GenAI regularly for specific tasks shown (%)



GenAI User Personas

How do talent use GenAI? Personas, challenges, and benefits

With an eye towards future uptake, we've created four GenAI personas to capture the notably different ways in which people who regularly use GenAI—39% of the talent in our survey—interact with the technology:



The GenAI Newcomer. Members of this group treat GenAI as if it were just the new Google. They use it for fun, to search for information, and to draft documents. Notably, this persona does not represent the largest group of users among respondents who are regular GenAI users.



The GenAI Taskmaster. Users in this category put GenAI to work as an assistant, turning over boring, routine tasks to the technology and thereby saving time and improving efficiency.



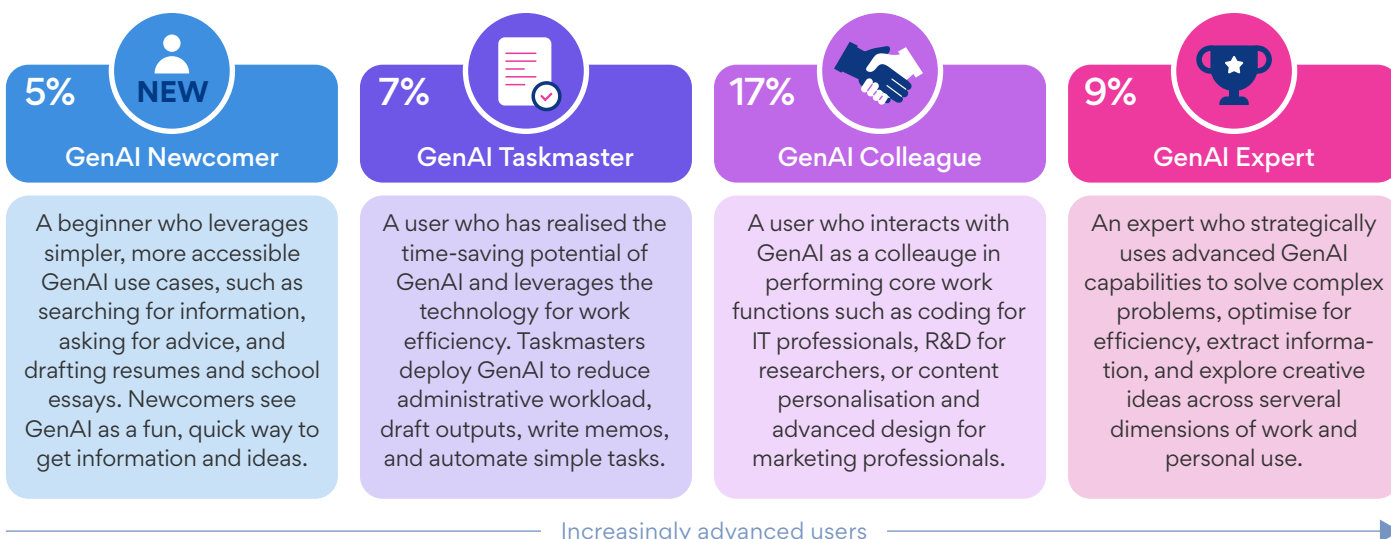
The GenAI Colleague. This persona likewise consists of users who put GenAI to work, but they adopt a more comprehensive approach than taskmasters do, assigning core parts of their workload to it. For example, IT professionals may use it to perform coding, and marketing managers may use it to create personalised content. This persona claims the largest number of talent, indicating that many people already use GenAI in a meaningful way.



The GenAI Expert. The advanced users in this persona leverage GenAI strategically for many different purposes in different areas of their lives. In our survey, they listed at least seven use cases, including complex tasks.

GenAI personas perceive distinct benefits and challenges

Regular users (39% of all users) fall into four personas



Willingness to Reskill

Would talent upskill themselves in the age of AI?

Talent around the world are open to reskilling—and not just because of GenAI. Overall, 57% of talent are willing to retrain to stay competitive. Those with low- or mid-level education tend to be more flexible than more highly-educated people, and older people are less open to reskilling in general.

Various factors drive openness to reskilling. Those who live in countries where job security is especially important are more likely to be open to reskilling, likely motivated by a desire to ensure their long-term employability. Similarly, talent who believe that GenAI will have a large impact on their jobs are more willing to reskill—perhaps as a preventive move so that they can switch to a different job altogether if necessary.

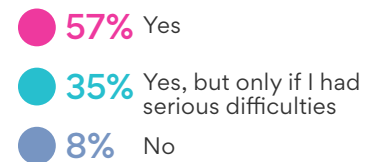
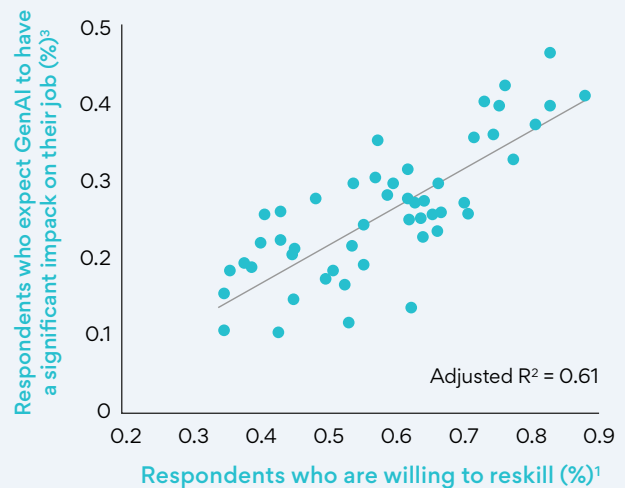
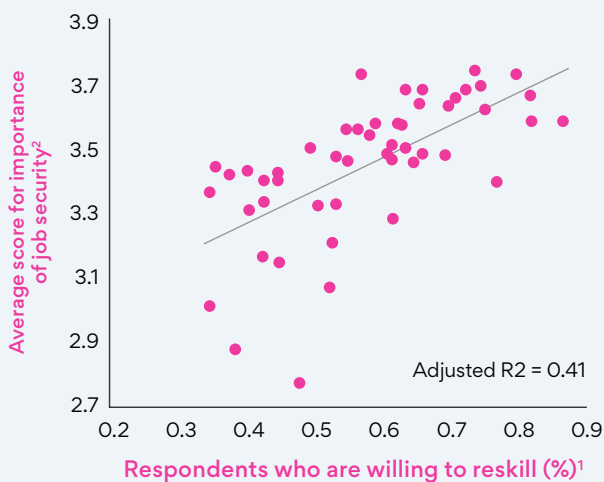


Exhibit 14 - Respondents' willingness to reskill is linked to the importance of job security and the perceived impact of GenAI



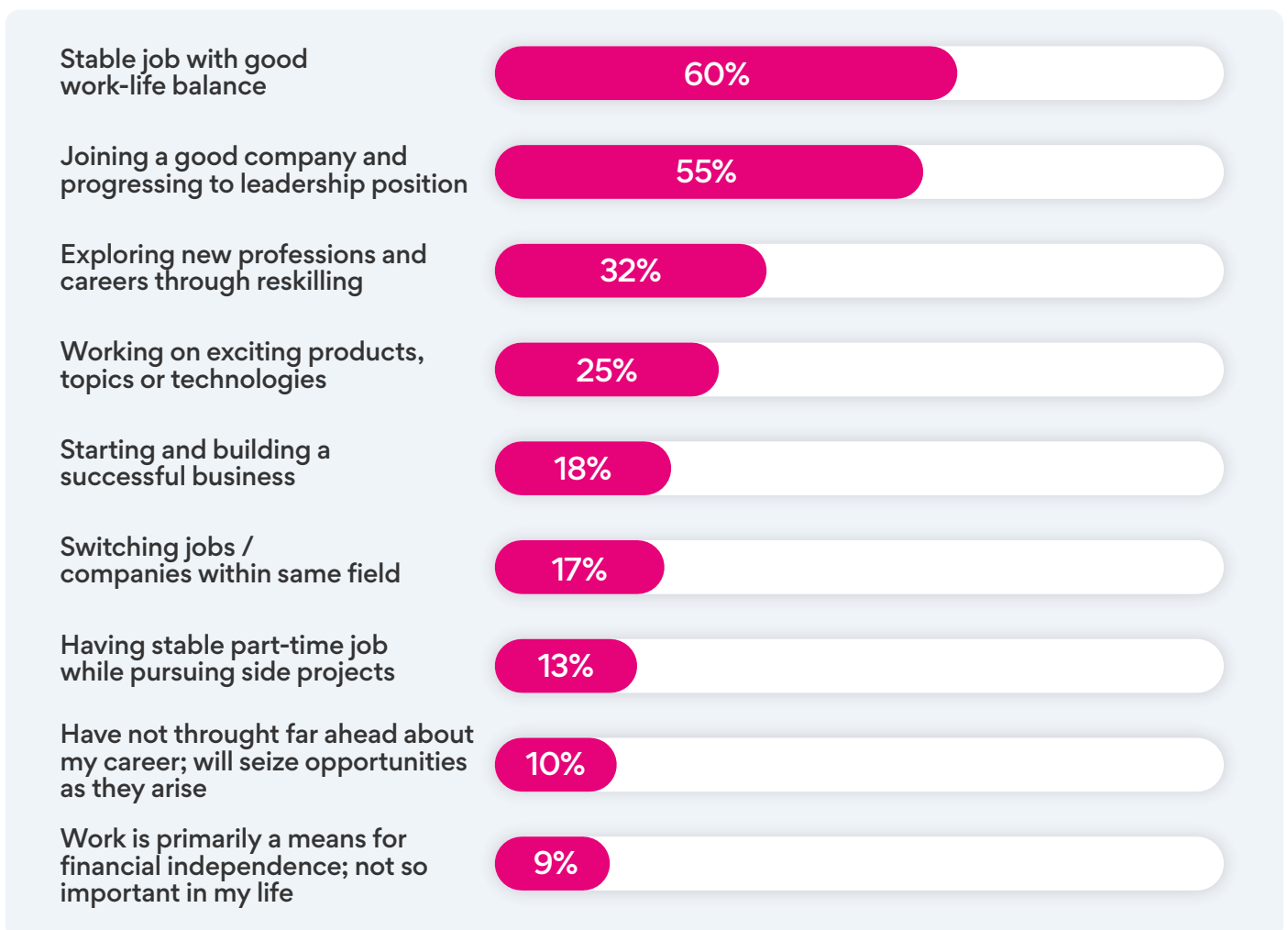
Ideal Career Path

What would be your ideal career path in the future?

When it comes to ideal career path, most people who work spend a substantial portion of their prime years working for various life reasons. Therefore, it is no surprise that many individuals have diverse career aspirations.

Globally, 3 out of 5 individuals envision their ideal career path as having a stable job that provides a healthy work-life balance. Many also aspire to join reputable companies and eventually take on leadership roles within these organisations.

Conversely, some people possess a more adventurous spirit, with 32% expressing a desire to explore new professions. They might do so until they discover their dream job or to stay aligned with current trends. Additionally, 1 in 4 individuals is interested in working on exciting products, topics, or technologies. Only 18% of individuals exhibit an entrepreneurial spirit, planning to start and build a successful business as their career.



Dealbreakers

However, understanding their career path alone is insufficient to attract talent. As much as 54% of talent globally stated they would turn down a good job offer for various reasons.

What factors would make talent walk away from a good job offer?

We asked survey respondents to imagine that they had received a job offer that ticked all the boxes on the list of what they were looking for. What would make them decline the offer anyway? What factors are so important that they would stand in the way of what would otherwise be an ideal job? Here's what we learned:

- **Negative impressions during the recruitment process**

would have a powerful impact. Nearly 70% of Europeans would refuse a good offer if they had formed such an impression during the interview process—if, for example, they were asked questions that they consider discriminatory or if they had bad chemistry with the interviewer. The same is true for nearly 60% of respondents in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- **A negative impact on society**

was the next-biggest dealbreaker. In fact, respondents in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa deemed it the number-one dealbreaker. Globally, some 40% of workers would not join an employer whose services, activities, or products have a deleterious social effect.

- **Lack of mental health or well-being support**

was another leading dealbreaker, particularly among respondents from Asia-Pacific countries and sub-Saharan Africa.

- We've seen global talent give increasing weight to values, and a **lack of sustainability measures or environmental initiatives** is now a top-ten dealbreaker.

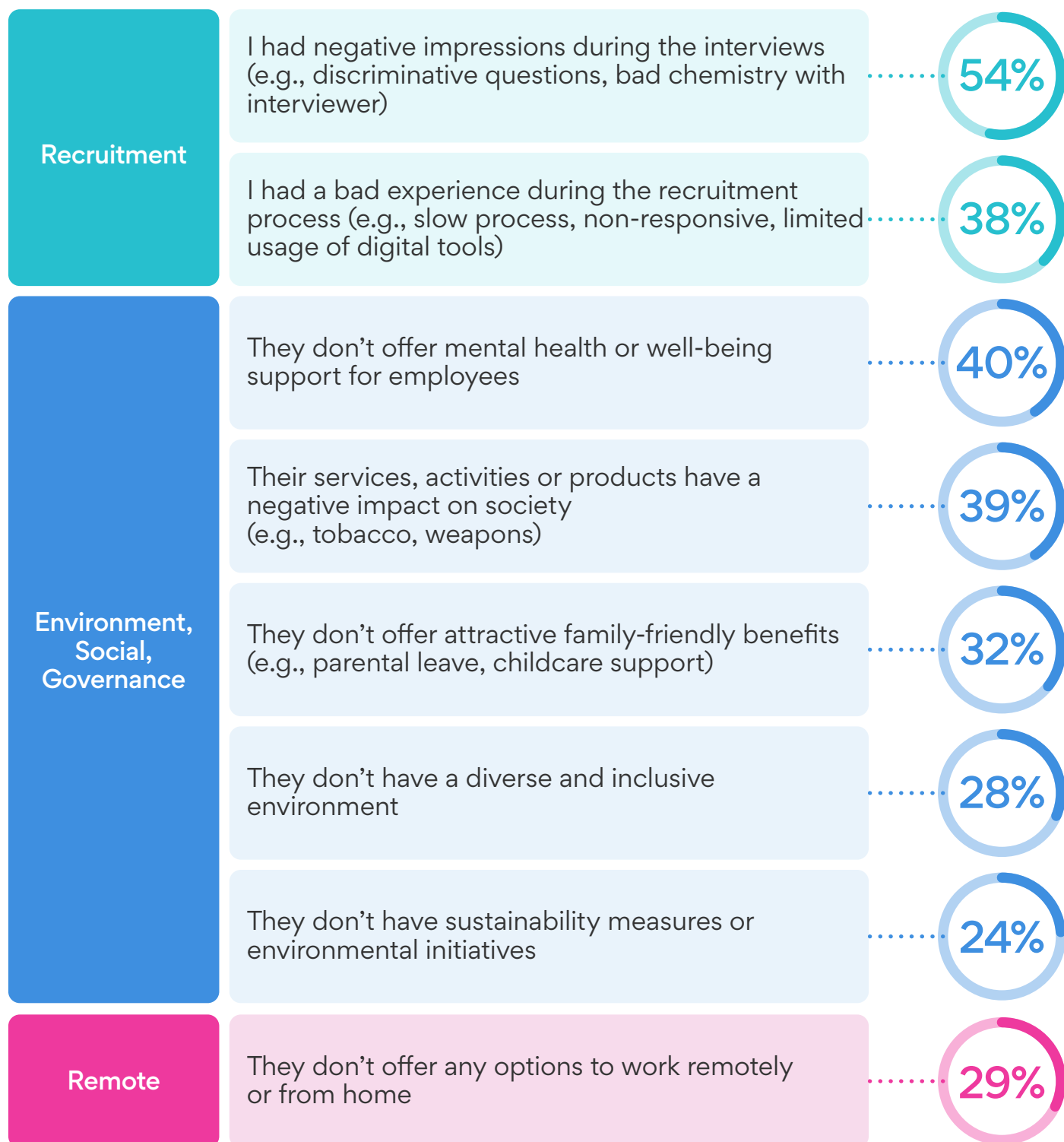
- **Being able to work remotely**

is not a dealbreaker in many regions, although it is still fairly important among Europeans. In past editions of Decoding Global Talent, workers expressed a strong preference for working in a hybrid mode when asked about their ideal working arrangements. They may still prefer to do so, but in most regions this is not a make-or-break consideration. Ultimately, values and the recruitment process seem to matter more.



Dealbreakers

Talent would refuse an attractive offer from an employer if...



GenAI's Impact in Malaysia

This section aims to address the following questions regarding the adoption of GenAI, its use cases across personal and work lives based on 6,774 respondents from Malaysia:

- 1 How often do Malaysians use GenAI?
- 2 How much exposure do various professions have with regular use of AI?
- 3 How do Malaysians use AI for their work?
- 4 How do Malaysians use AI in their personal lives?
- 5 How has the usage of GenAI helped Malaysians in their current work profiles?
- 6 How do Malaysians utilise the output generated by GenAI?
- 7 What are the challenges Malaysians face while using GenAI?
- 8 What resources do Malaysians need to better utilise GenAI?
- 9 What do Malaysians think about impact of GenAI on their job in the next 5 years?



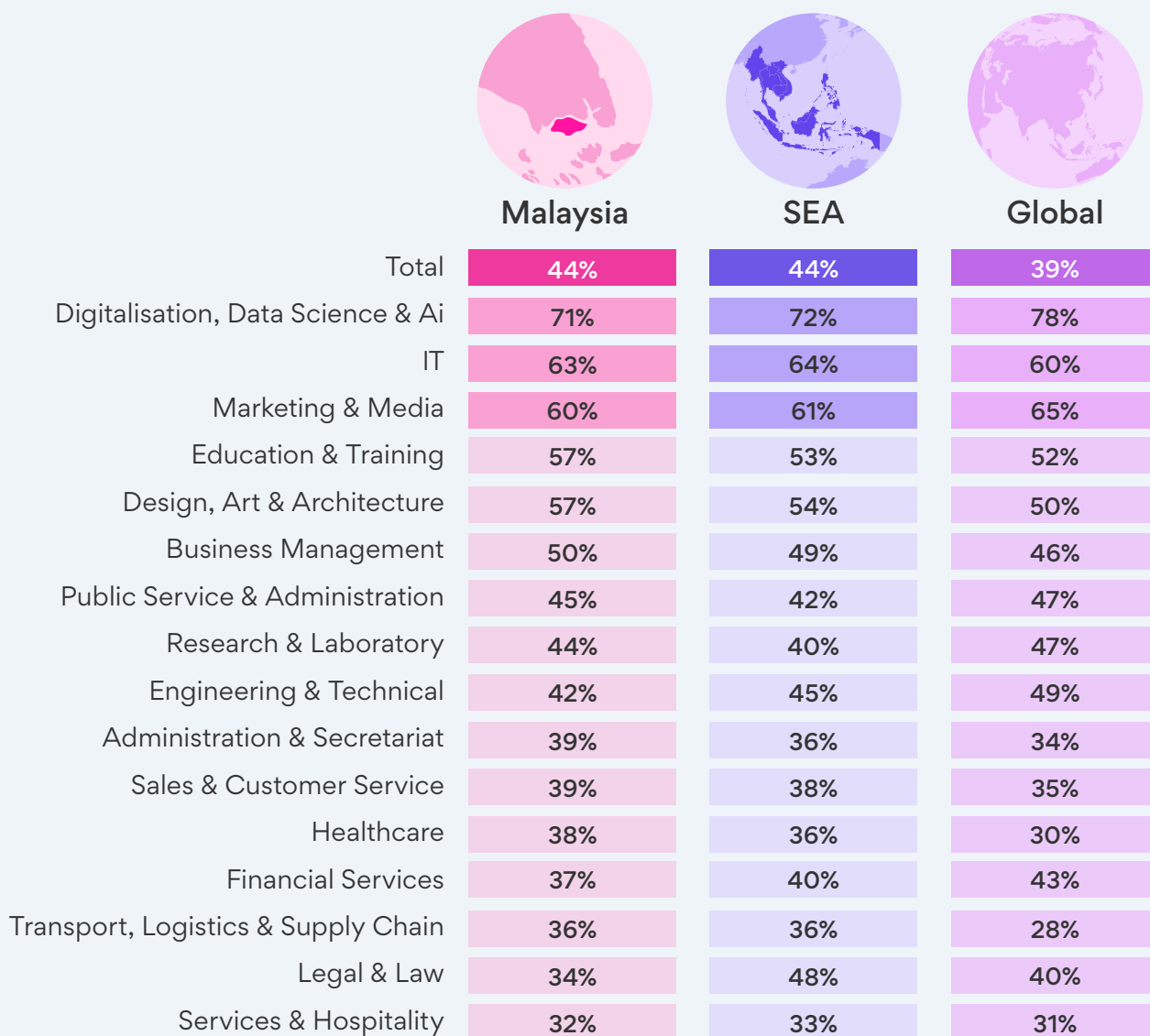
SEA countries include respondents from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Use of GenAI in Malaysia

GenAI has been increasingly adopted since its dramatic debut in 2023, with 60% of Malaysians trying it in their work or personal life.

About 44% use GenAI monthly, a figure that slightly surpasses the global average of 39% and matches the Southeast Asian average. This high adoption rate in Malaysia can be attributed to the National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Roadmap 2021-2025, which promotes AI use across various sectors.

Frequency of using GenAI by job roles

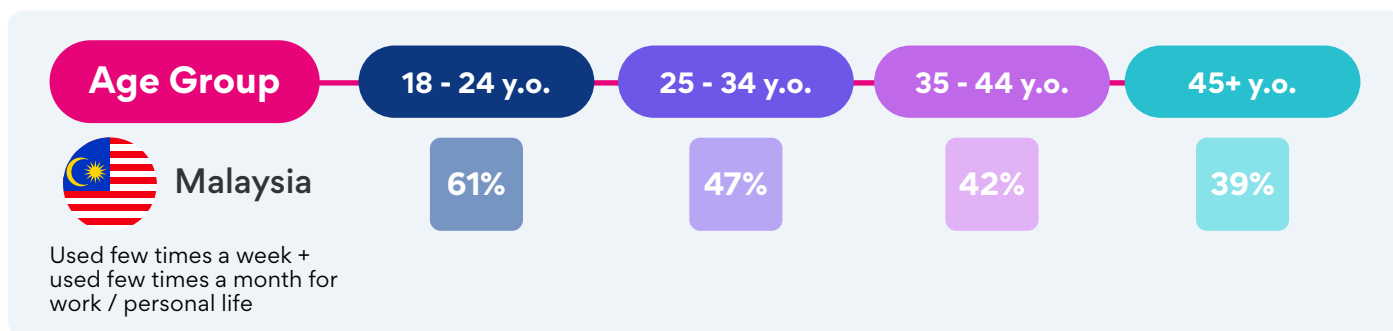


*Adoption refers to regular users only.

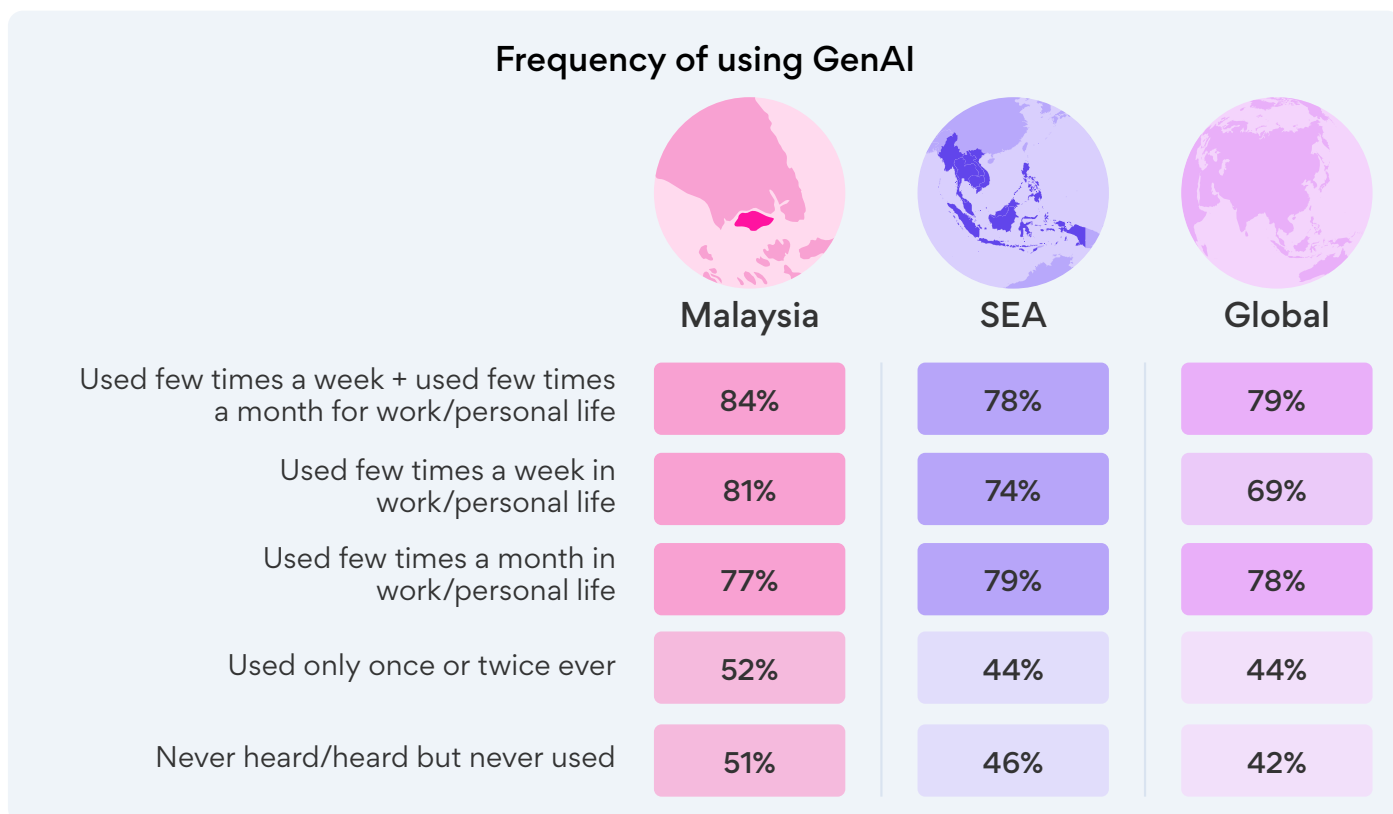
Source: 2023 BCG/The Network/Stepstone Group proprietary web survey and analysis

Adoption Across Professions

However, the frequency of GenAI use varies significantly among different age groups. Younger individuals, aged 18-24, are 50% more likely to use GenAI regularly compared to those over 45, highlighting easier tech adoption amongst the younger generation. Despite these trends, a notable 40% of Malaysians and 41% of Southeast Asians remain unfamiliar with GenAI, indicating significant potential for increasing awareness and usage.



AI adoption* varies widely across different job roles in Malaysia. Digitalisation, data science & AI lead the way, matching the adoption rates of their peers in Southeast Asia, though still lower than the global average. High adoption is also seen in IT, marketing & media, education & training, as well as design, art & architecture. Conversely, job roles like hospitality, legal and transportation see slower adoption, likely because these fields are perceived as less impacted by AI advancements.



Note: Split across age groups amongst regular users only.

Source: <https://www.mosti.gov.my/en/berita/malaysias-national-artificial-intelligence-ai-roadmap-2021-2025/>

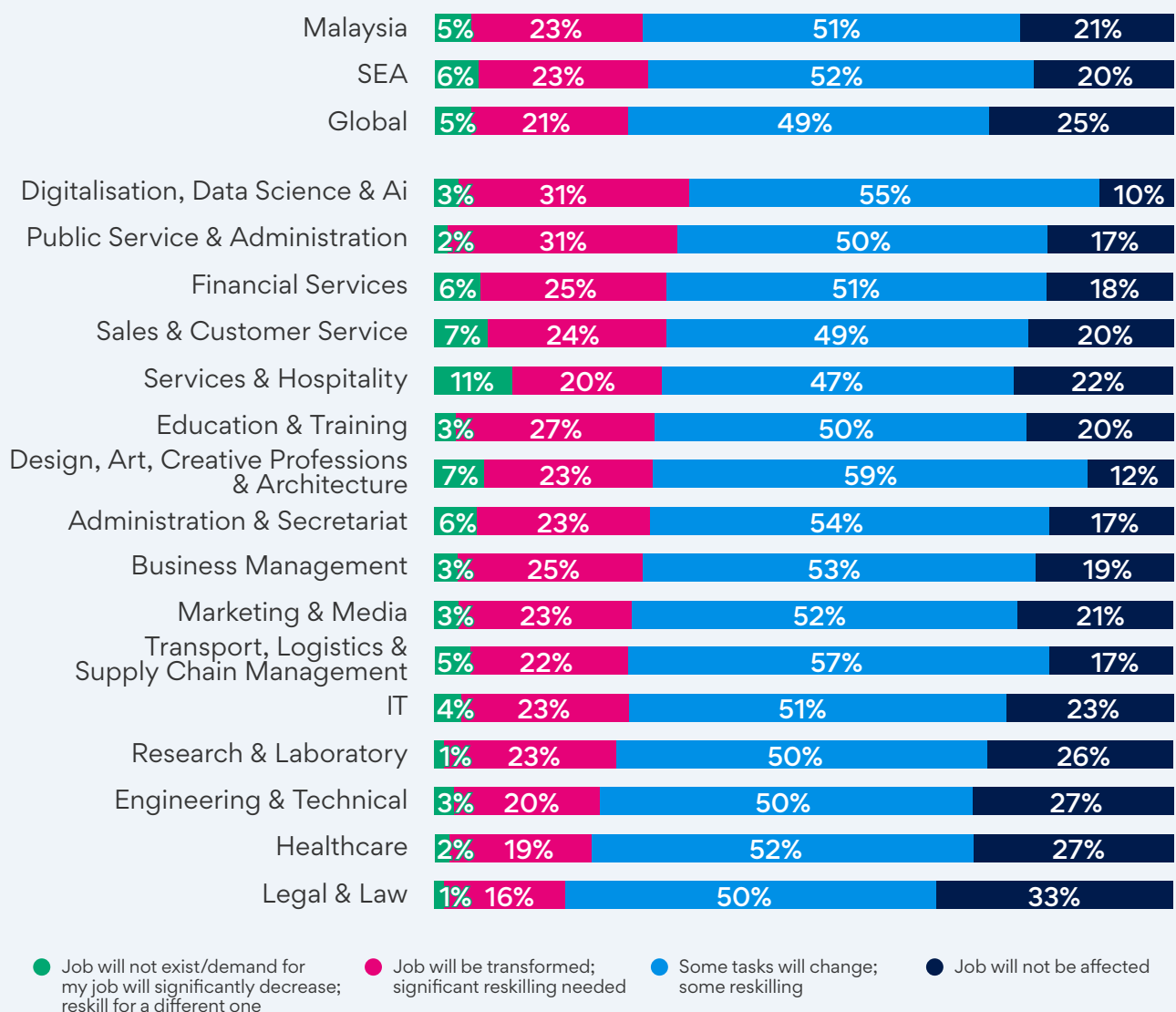
Source: 2023 BCG/The Network/Stepstone Group proprietary web survey and analysis.

Impact of GenAI

One of the biggest concerns about generative AI is job security and the risk of displacement.

In Malaysia, 79% of those surveyed believe AI will change some aspects of their work, with 28% expecting a major impact that could eliminate or significantly transform their jobs. Professionals in digitalisation, AI and public service are the most concerned, with 33% to 34% anticipating significant changes to their roles. Conversely, those in legal and healthcare are less worried, with 33% feeling their jobs will remain unaffected, reflecting their lower need to adopt GenAI in their work.

Perception of impact of GenAI on their jobs in the next 5 years

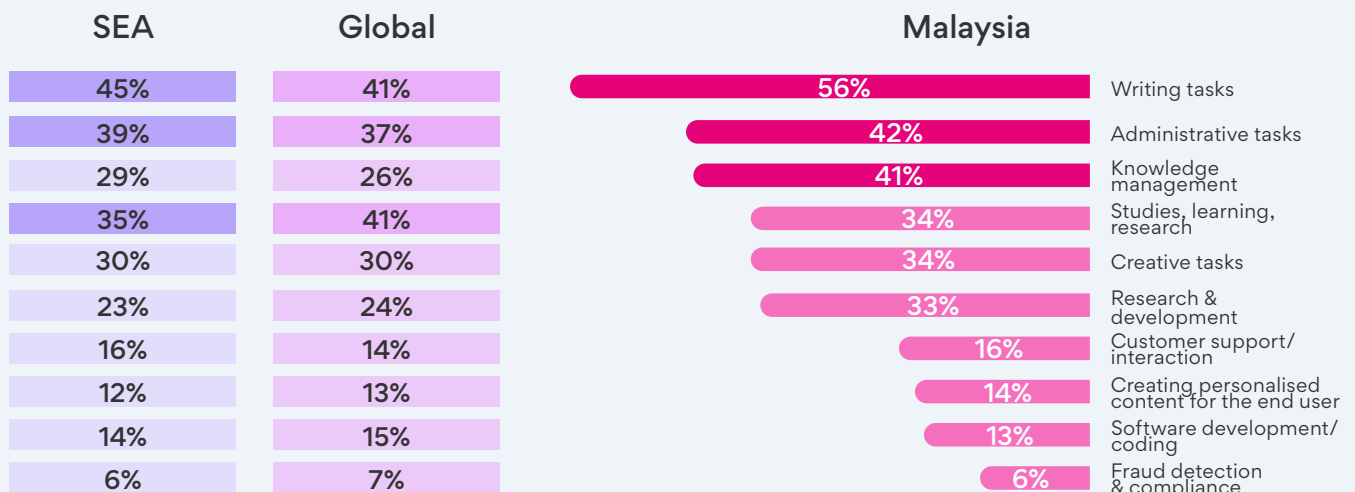


GenAI Work/Personal Uses

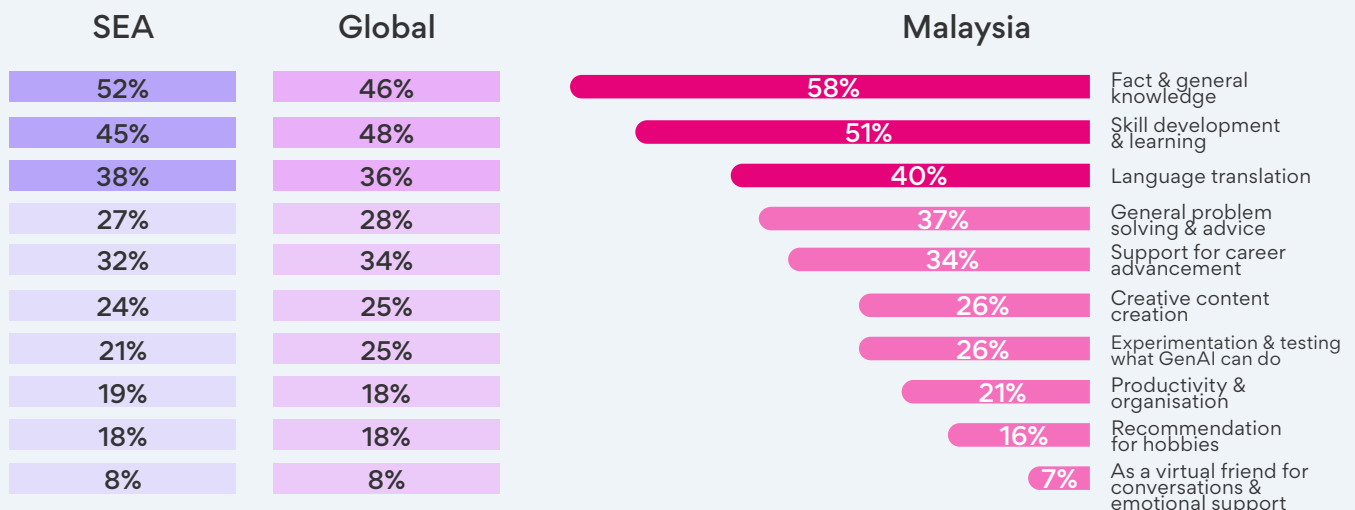
Like global trends, when Malaysians incorporate AI into their work, it is primarily for writing, administrative duties and knowledge management. Compared to their peers in Southeast Asia and around the world, Malaysians are particularly proficient in knowledge management as well as research and development. However, AI is used less frequently in fraud detection and compliance.

In their personal lives, Malaysians mainly use GenAI for facts, general knowledge, skill development and language translation. A unique aspect is that more Malaysians use GenAI to solve general problems and seek advice, more so than their peers in Southeast Asia and around the world.

Usage of GenAI in work



Usage of GenAI in personal life

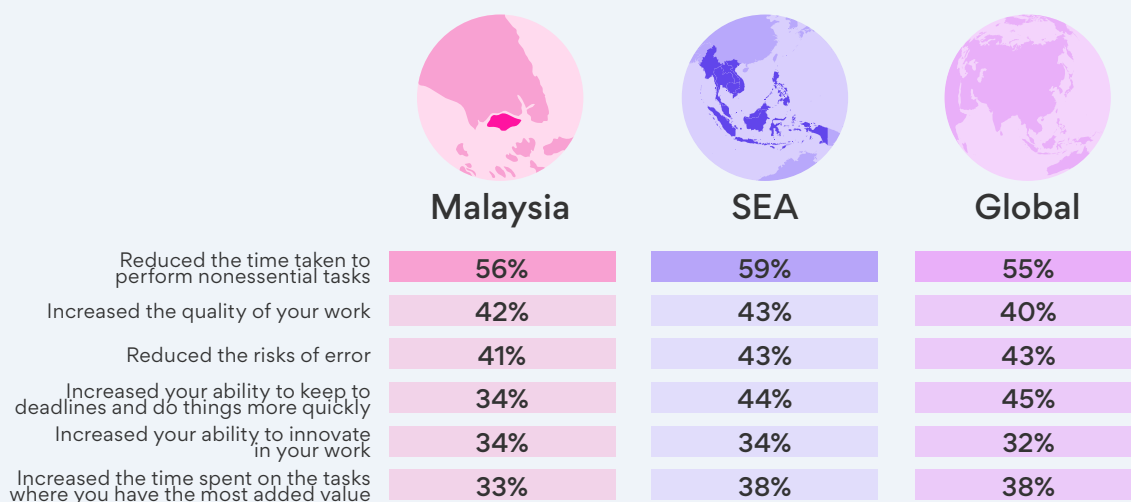


End Uses of GenAI

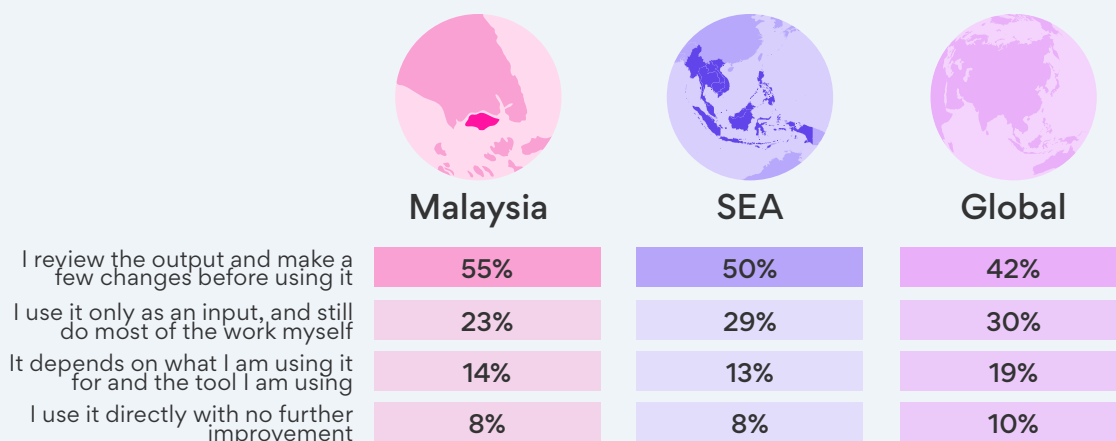
The biggest benefits of GenAI for Malaysians is the reduction of time spent on non-essential tasks and improving the quality of their work, with the latter being notably higher than in Southeast Asia and around the world. However, fewer Malaysians use GenAI to help meet deadlines and speed up tasks.

More than half of Malaysians review and modify GenAI outputs, showing higher confidence and reliance on AI compared to their peers in Southeast Asia and around the world, where more people use GenAI only as a starting point and do most of the work themselves.

Usage of GenAI in current work profiles



Utilisation of the output generated by GenAI

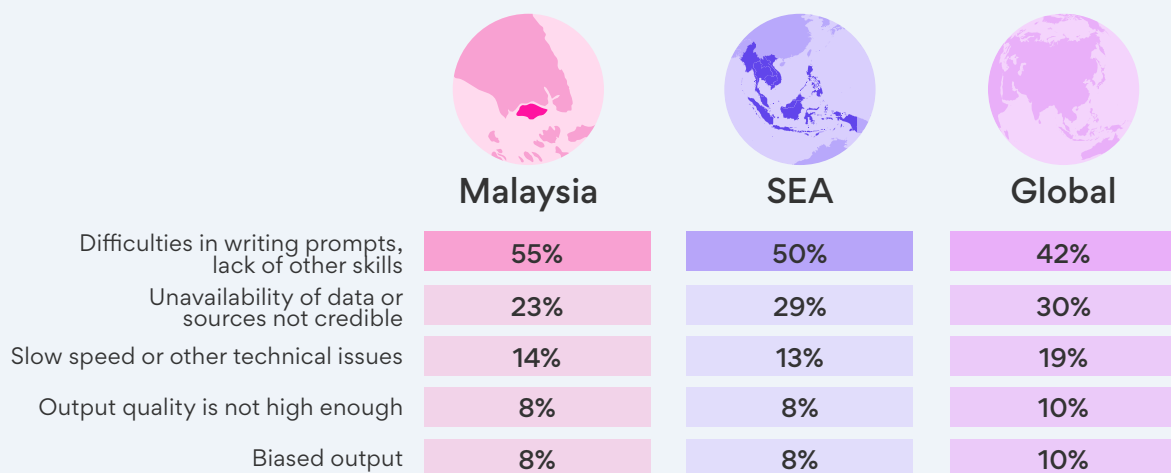


Roadblocks in using GenAI

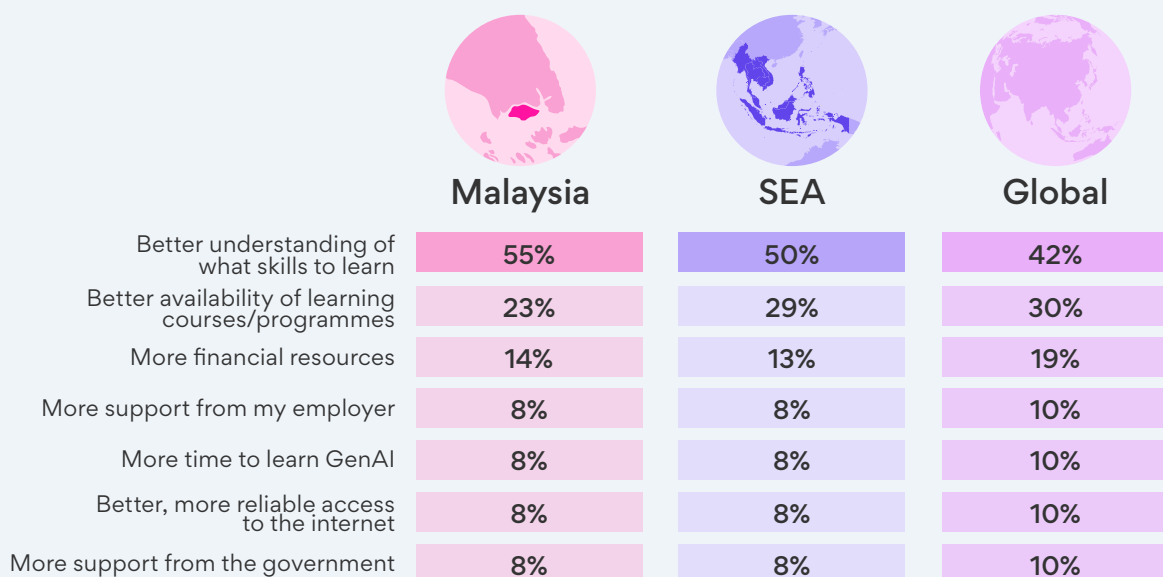
The biggest dissatisfaction among talent in Malaysia centres on the difficulty in writing prompts and the availability or credibility of data. Malaysians find writing prompts more challenging compared to their Southeast Asian and global peers, potentially limiting their effective use of GenAI despite strong interest.

Consequently, many Malaysians want to know which skills they need to learn and seek better learning programmes to enhance their GenAI usage. This presents an opportunity for businesses or the government to provide targeted training and support.

Challenges faced while using GenAI



Resources needed to better utilise GenAI



GenAI User Personas

The 44% of GenAI users in Malaysia can be classified into various personas*.

The most common persona is the 'Colleague' group, which includes talent in business management, engineering and technical roles, IT, sales and customer services. 'Newcomer' personas are typically young talent new to the workforce, while senior talents (45+) may also fall under 'Newcomer' or 'Colleague' depending on their AI proficiency.

Overall, Malaysia has a higher proportion of expert users compared to the global average. These 'Colleague' and 'Taskmaster' users engage with GenAI for complex tasks such as R&D, content personalisation, exploring creative ideas and solving intricate problems.

**See page 13 of this report for persona definitions*

Newcomer



Malaysia

4%



SEA

5%



Global

5%

Characteristics:

Lean more towards 18 – 24 y.o., 45+ y.o.
Administration and secretariat job roles.
Uses AI output directly without any improvement.

Taskmaster



Malaysia

7%



SEA

9%



Global

7%

Characteristics:

Lean more towards 35 – 44 y.o., Administration and Secretariat, Business Management, Financial Services job roles. Reviews AI output and makes a few changes before using it.

Colleague



Malaysia

21%



SEA

20%



Global

17%

Characteristics:

Lean more towards 45+, Business Management, Engineering and Technical, IT, Sales and Customer Service job roles. Uses GenAI as input and still do most of the work themselves.

Expert



Malaysia

11%



SEA

9%



Global

9%

Characteristics:

Lean more towards: Business Management, IT, Marketing and Media, Sales and Customer Service job roles. Reviews AI output and makes a few changes before using it.

Reskilling and Learning in Malaysia

This section aims to address the following questions regarding the willingness and appetite to reskill, skills needed and methods based on 6,774 respondents from Malaysia:

- 1 Would Malaysians retrain for a completely different job to stay competitive?
- 2 Which skills are Malaysians focusing on improving right now?
- 3 Which learning and development activities did Malaysians engage in during the year 2023?
- 4 What learning formats do Malaysians prefer for learning and development, and improving skills?
- 5 How much average time did Malaysians spend on learning and development activities in 2023?
- 6 How much time do Malaysians prefer to dedicate to learning in one sitting?



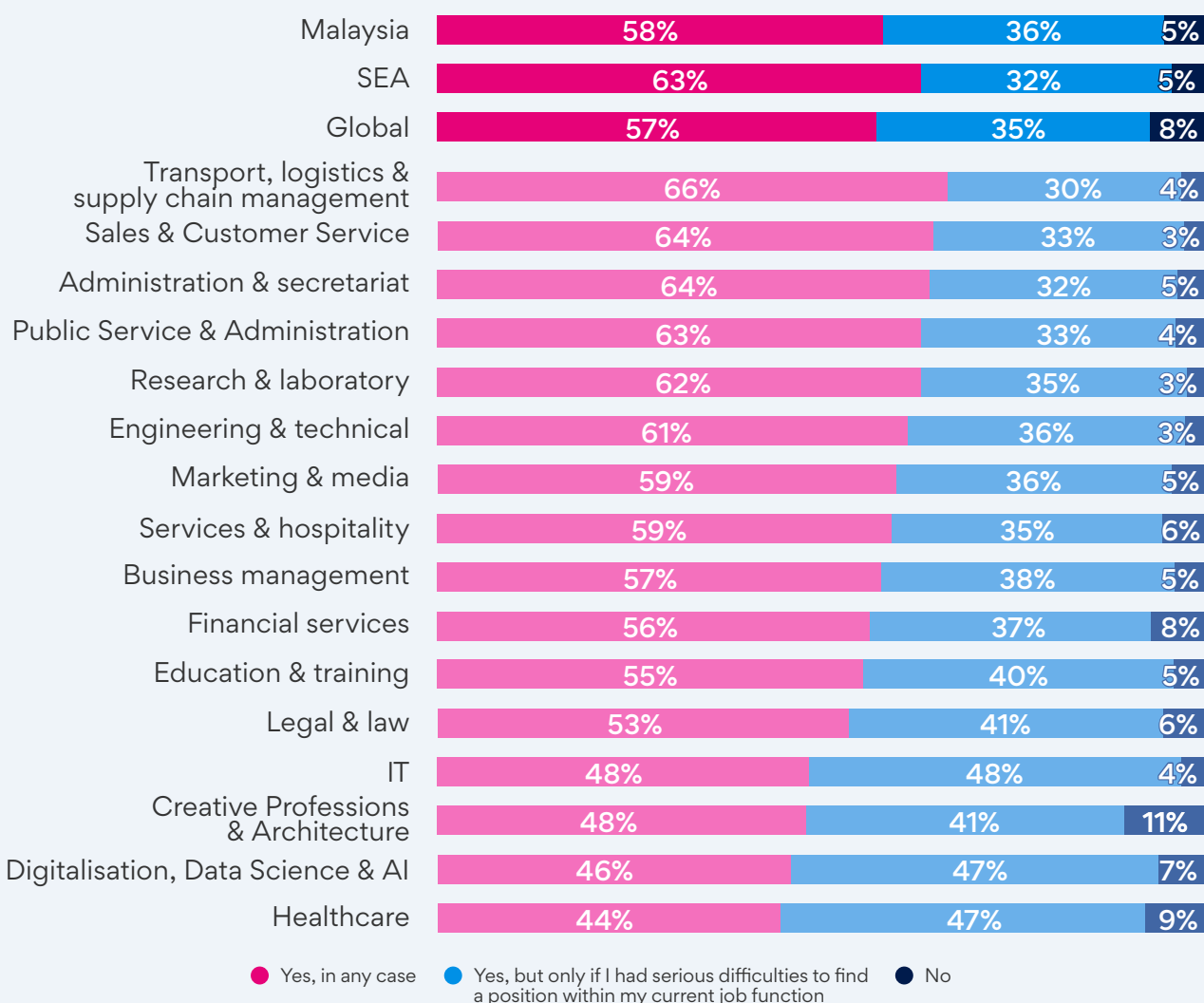
Willingness to Reskill

In Malaysia, nearly 60% of professionals are willing to reskill to stay relevant during the AI revolution, while 36% would consider reskilling only if absolutely necessary. This contrasts with Southeast Asia, where there is a higher readiness to reskill regardless of circumstances.

Professions in transportation, sales and customer service, administration and public service are more proactive about acquiring new skills to maintain their competitive edge. Both sales and customer service and public service roles are highly aware of the potential disruption AI could bring to their fields.

Conversely, healthcare and legal professionals are more likely to reskill only if they face significant challenges in their jobs, as these roles are perceived to be less impacted by AI.

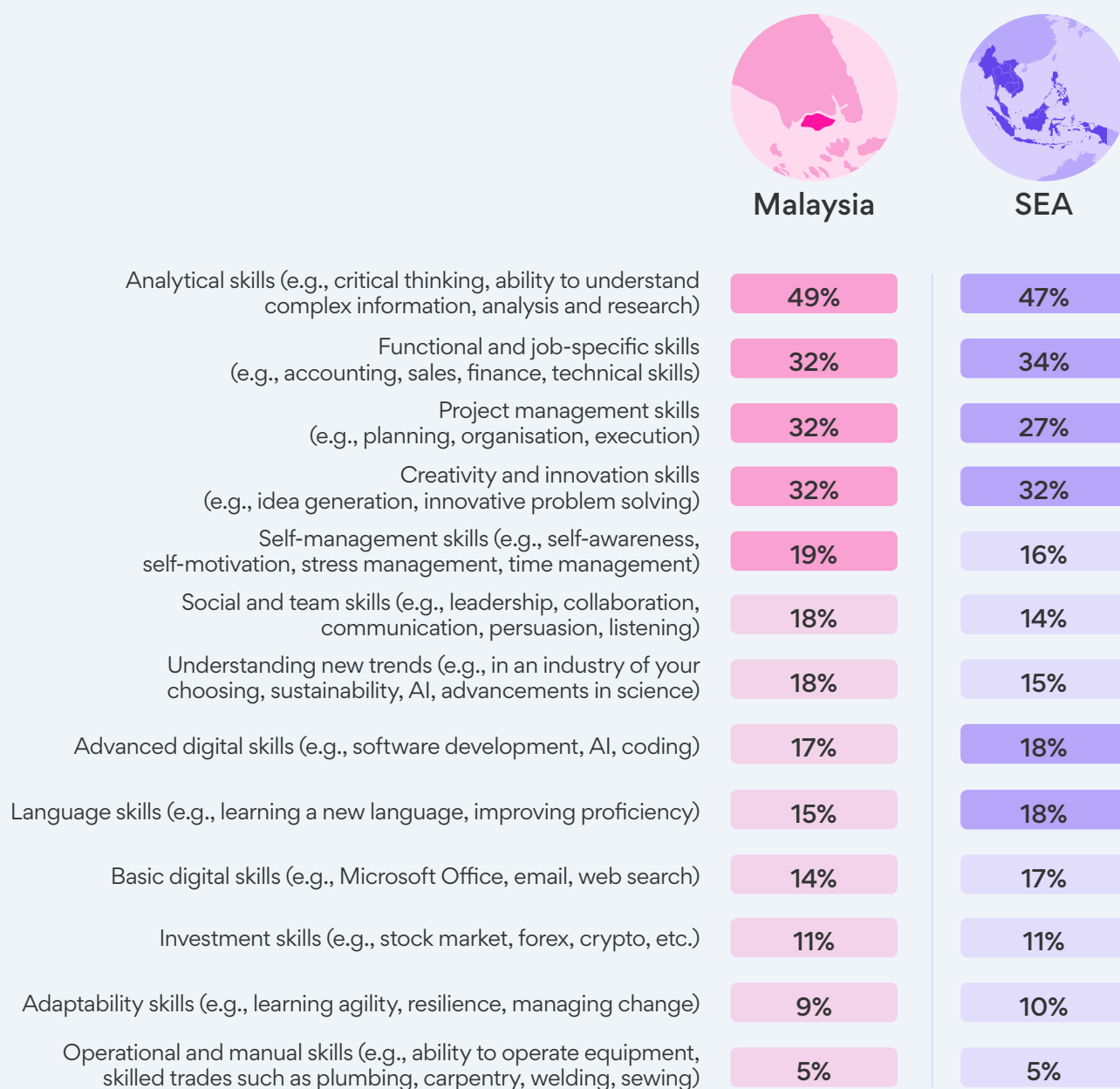
Willingness to reskill by job role to stay competitive in general



Skills Improvement

When asked about current skill development priorities, most Malaysians highlighted analytical skills and functional/job-specific skills as their top choices. Following these are project management, creativity and language skills. Overall, these priorities align closely with the skills in demand by Southeast Asian talent.

Skills that talent are focusing on improving now

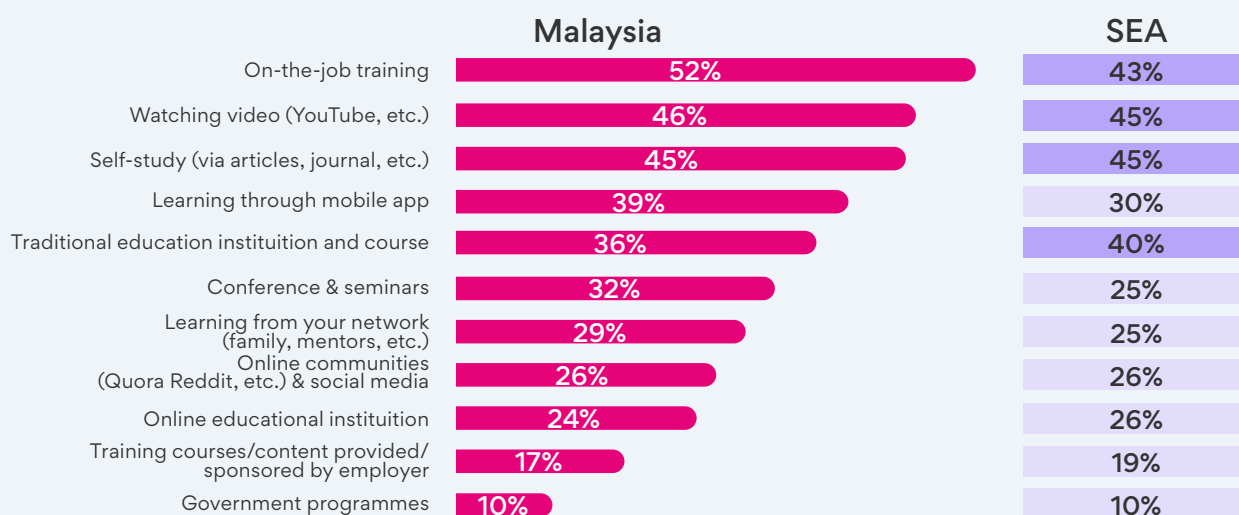


Learning & Development

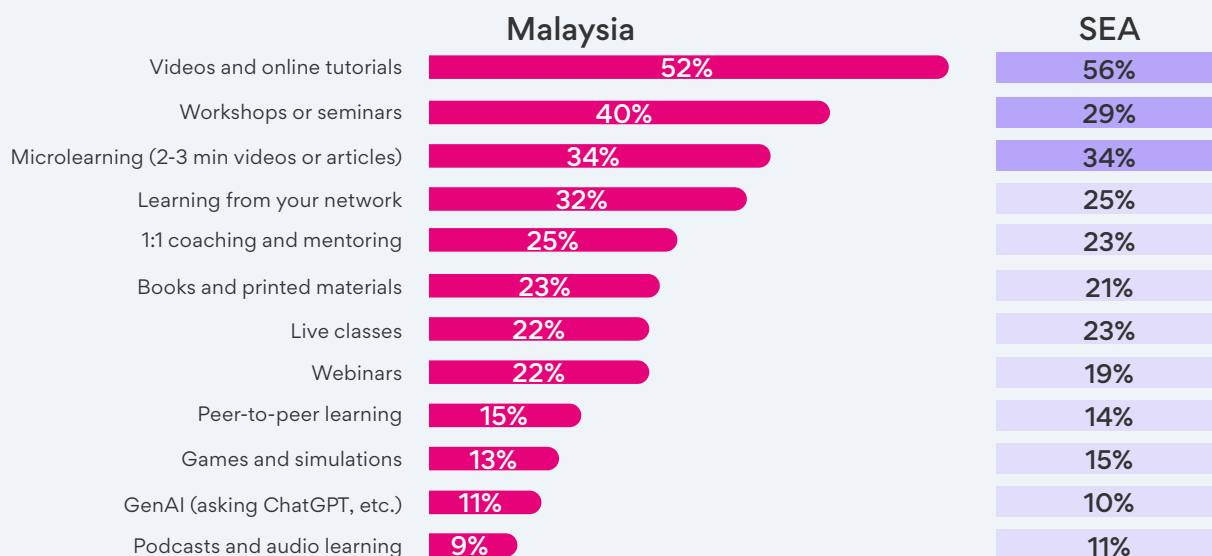
Similar to their peers in Southeast Asia, most talent in Malaysia engage in on-the-job training, complemented by self-paced training videos, reading materials and mobile apps. However, Malaysians have a higher participation rate in learning through mobile apps, likely due to the country's high mobile penetration rate. As of Q4 2023, there were 49.4 million mobile-cellular subscriptions in Malaysia, compared to an estimated population of 34.3 million.

When it comes to training formats, both Malaysian and Southeast Asian talent show a strong preference for videos and online tutorials, workshops and seminars and microlearning formats like 2-3 minute videos or articles.

Learning & development activities engaged in 2023



Learning formats preferred for learning & development

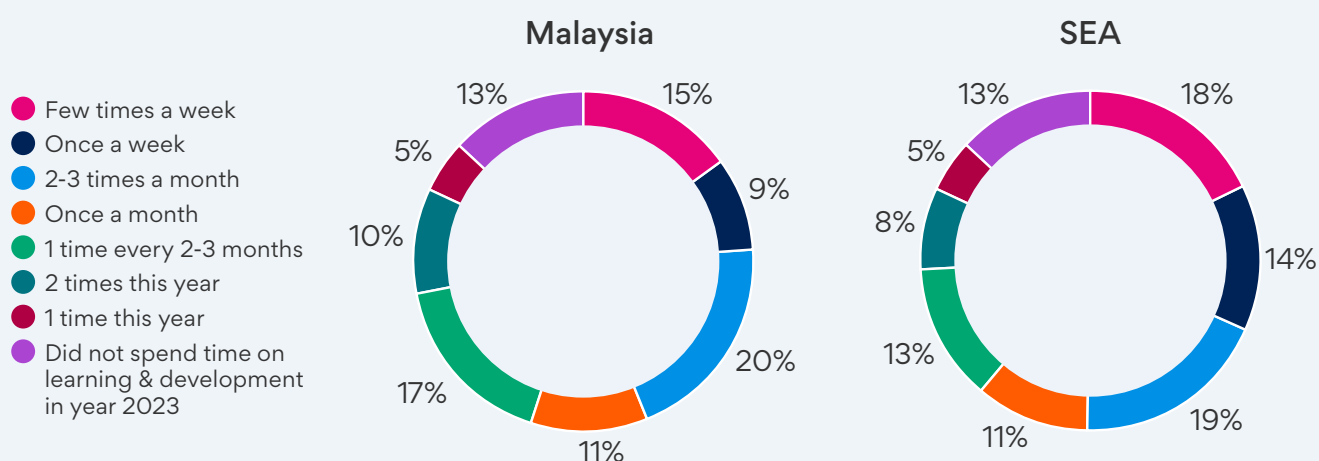


Time Spent and Preferences

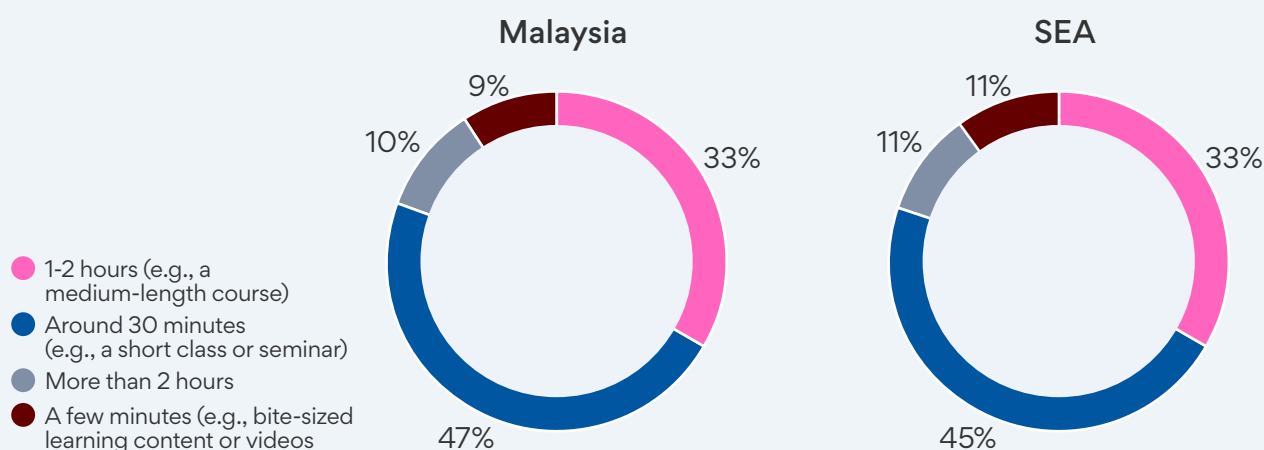
Learning and development activities might need more attention for Malaysian professionals. Last year, 13% did not participate in any such activities, like their peers in Southeast Asia. Generally, they engaged in learning 2-3 times per month and sometimes even several times a week. It's encouraging that over 50% dedicated time to learning at least once a month.

Although Malaysians generally spent less time on learning and development compared to their SEA counterparts, they focus on maximising the effectiveness of the time they do invest. Most respondents from both regions prefer learning sessions that last between 30 minutes and two hours in a single sitting.

Average time spent on learning & development activities in 2023



Time preferred to dedicate to learning & development in one sitting



Work Preferences in Malaysia

This section aims to address the following questions regarding work preferences based on 6,774 respondents from Malaysia:

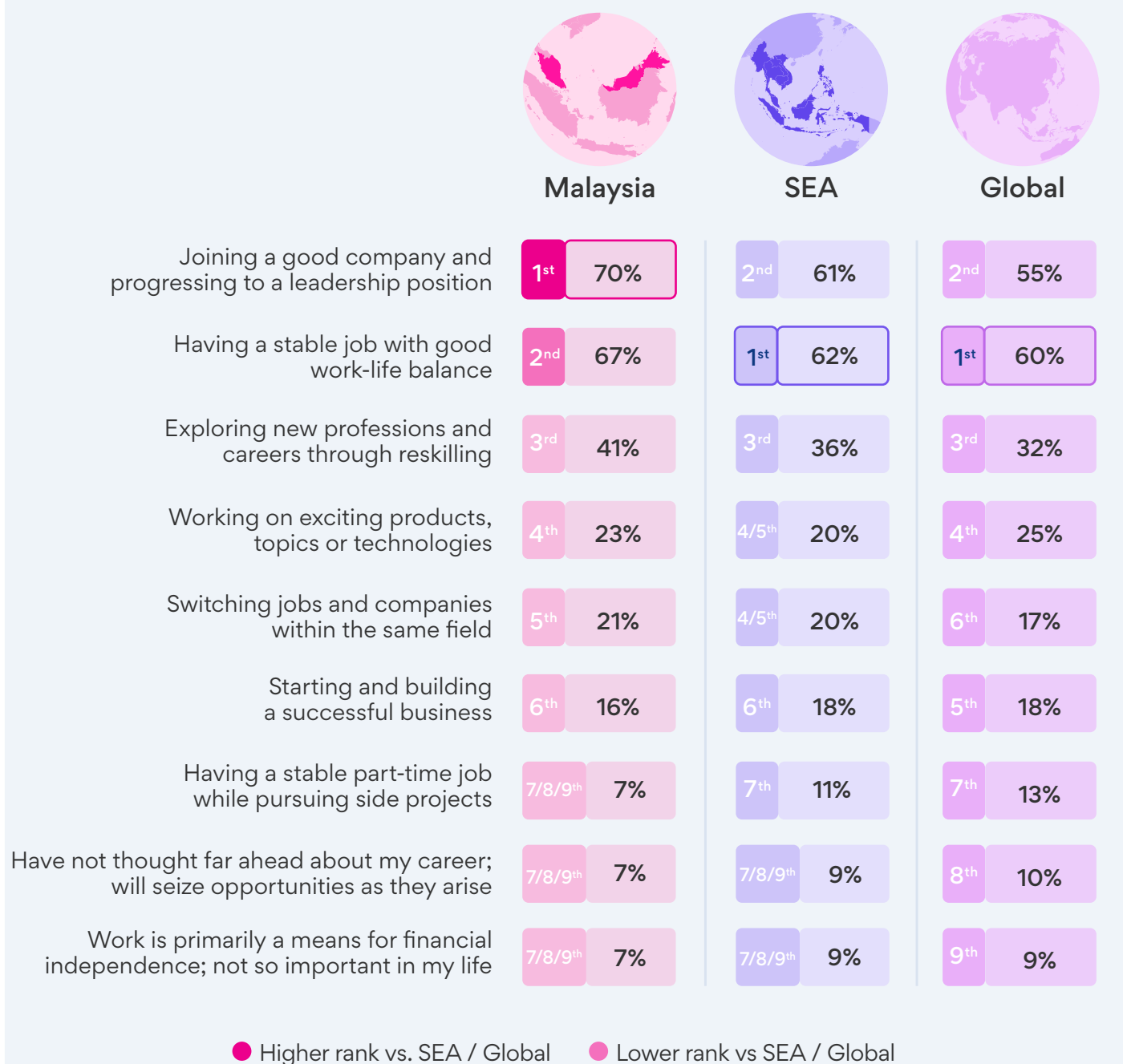
- 1 How do Malaysians imagine their ideal career path to be?
- 2 What would be Malaysians' preferred working model in the future?
- 3 What would make Malaysians refuse an attractive job offer?



Ideal Career Path

Overall, like their SEA and global counterparts, Malaysians desire joining a reputable company with good career progression opportunities followed by a stable job with good work-life balance. They show a strong interest in exploring new professions and careers through reskilling but less interest in having a stable part-time job to pursue side projects.

Ideal Career Path amongst talent

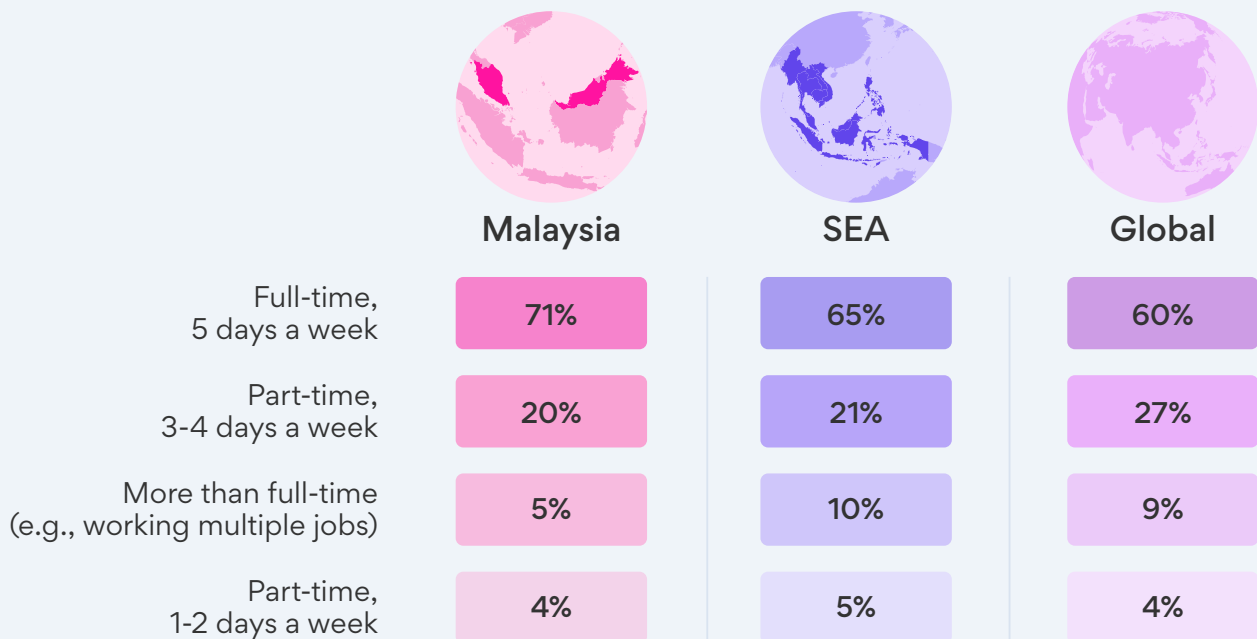


Work Preferences

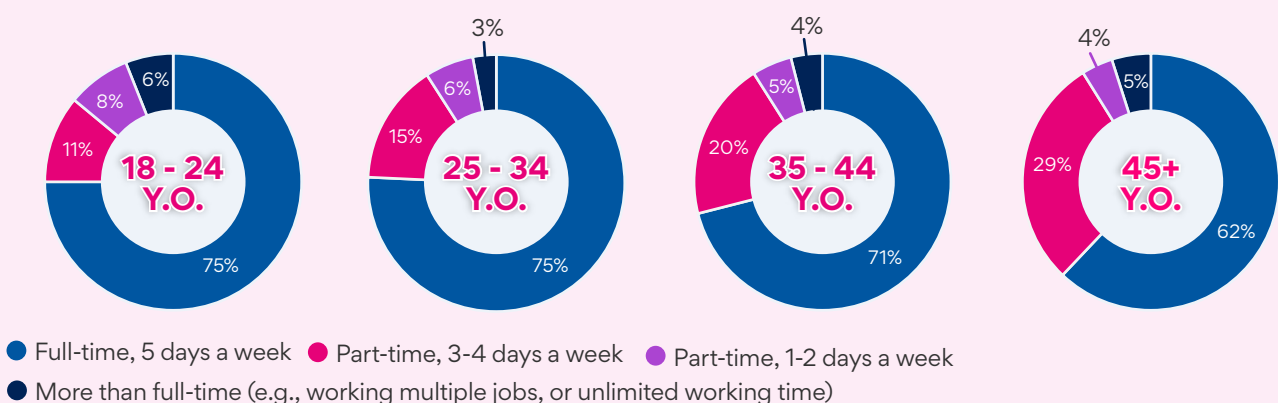
The majority of Malaysia's workforce favours a conventional full-time five-day work week, with only 20% preferring part-time compared to 27% globally. Interestingly, only 5% of Malaysian professionals would want to work more than full-time with multiple jobs, which is half the rate of their SEA and global counterparts. This aligns with their ideal career path of joining a reputable company, progressing to leadership positions and having a stable job with a good work-life balance.

Young professionals aged 18-24 show the highest preference for a five-day work week and even more than full-time, but as they gain experience, they generally shift towards preferring part-time work as they grow older.

Working model preferences



Working model preferences by age groups



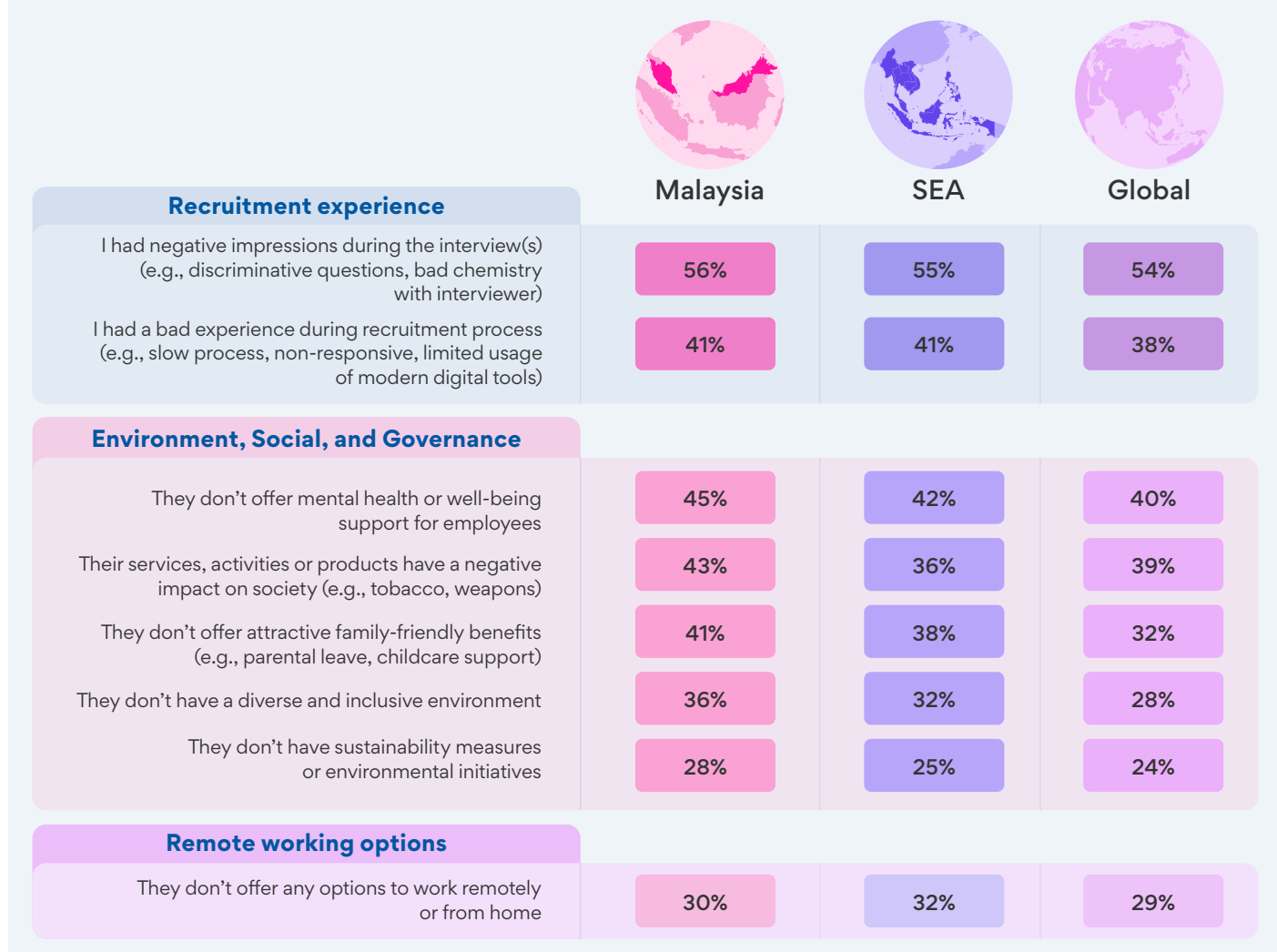
Dealbreakers for Malaysians

Most Malaysians are likely to decline a job offer if they encounter a negative recruitment experience.

Negative impressions during interviews, such as being asked discriminatory questions or having poor chemistry with the interviewer, are highly rated concerns. They would also reject job offers from employers who are non-responsive or slow during the recruitment process.

Societal issues also play a role, with less emphasis on mental health and well-being support and a strong aversion to services, activities, and products that negatively impact society, which can deter them from accepting a job offer. In contrast, sustainability measures or environmental initiatives are a lower priority for Malaysians.

Reasons talent reject an attractive job offer



Conclusion & Recommendations



Key Insights: Malaysia

Most of the global trends apply to Malaysians, but there are some notable differences specific to the region.

GenAI Adoption: Boosting Efficiency and Skills

In Malaysia, GenAI has been widely adopted, with 60% of professionals having tried it and 44% using it monthly, matching SEA and exceeding global averages. It is primarily used in sectors like digitalisation, IT, marketing, education, and design, while adoption lags in hospitality and legal fields.

- ✓ **Work Applications:** Writing, administrative work, and knowledge management, focusing on R&D but less on fraud detection.
- ✓ **Personal Applications:** Facts, skill development, and problem-solving.
- ✓ **Benefits:** Time-saving and improved work quality.
- ✓ **Challenges:** Prompt writing and data credibility.
- ✓ **User Personas:** About 44% fit into personas like 'Colleagues' and 'Masters,' indicating advanced adoption and proficiency in using AI for complex tasks like R&D, surpassing global averages.

Reskilling Priorities: Preparing for AI Disruption

The majority of Malaysians are prepared to reskill for the AI era, especially those in jobs likely to be disrupted by AI, such as transportation, sales and customer service, administration, and public service. Meanwhile, healthcare and legal professionals are less inclined to reskill due to the perceived minimal impact of AI on their fields.

- ✓ **Top Skill Priorities:** Analytical skills, job-specific skills, project management, creativity, and language skills.
- ✓ **Learning Methods:** On-the-job training and self-paced learning through videos, reading materials, and apps.
- ✓ **Mobile Learning:** High reliance on mobile apps, supported by the country's high mobile penetration rate.
- ✓ **Preferred Formats:** Videos, online tutorials, workshops, seminars, and microlearning.
- ✓ **Engagement and Preferred Session Length:** Around 13% did not engage in learning activities last year, but most dedicate time monthly to effective learning sessions lasting 30 minutes to two hours.

Key Insights: Malaysia

Career Goals: Balancing Stability and Growth

Malaysian professionals prioritise career progression and work-life balance, aligning with global trends. They are interested in reskilling for new careers but less inclined towards stable part-time work.

- ✓ **Job Preferences:** Full-time jobs preferred; younger professionals prefer full-time, older ones part-time as they gain experience.
- ✓ **Recruitment Considerations:** Positive experiences, timely processes.
- ✓ **Values:** Support for mental health, societal impacts of employers' products and services.
- ✓ **Lower Priority:** Sustainability initiatives.

In the next pages, our report lays out detailed findings on the priorities and preferences of workers in Malaysia, complete with recommendations for employers on how to attract and retain workers during periods of change.



Recommendations for Malaysian Employers



Focus on employee experience and make it count

Committing to an existing or new employer is a decision that workers won't make lightly, particularly during periods of change. Employers can gain an advantage in the race for talent by maintaining a workplace that provides a sense of security, good work-life balance, strong relationships, and opportunities for development. To fill talent gaps, employers can optimise the talent cycle—from anticipating talent needs to attracting, developing, and engaging suitable talent.

1 ANTICIPATING TALENT NEEDS



Forecast the impact of technology on the organisation's workforce.

A critical task for employers involves quantifying how new technologies will impact their need for workers and skills—and how that demand will extend across organisations and industries, thus affecting the competition for talent.

Organisations can benefit from treating strategic workforce planning as a regular process. As part of that planning, they should assess which tasks are most likely to be automated, identify skills that may become outdated or emerge, and evaluate the capabilities that will be needed in the future. Additionally, they should also take into account the effects of regulatory changes and technology improvements.

The next step is to compare their assessment of employment demand with a forecast of talent supply, considering retirement ages and turnover. Supply-and-demand forecasts should extend across a period of three to five years. Understanding the gaps uncovered through this analytical process will help guide appropriate reskilling strategies.

Recommendations for Malaysian Employers



Shift to skills-based human resource management.

A static college degree seems less relevant in an environment where rapid technological change requires employees to dynamically acquire new and evolving skills. Hiring and promoting based on skills—as opposed to degrees, university prestige, or years of experience—will unlock a larger and more diverse talent pool, enabling employers to fill workforce gaps more creatively. This also includes recruiting from new countries. As our Decoding Global Talent series has shown, people in emerging economies are highly mobile, ready to learn, and comfortable with new technologies. Their skills and potential make them a great option for filling workforce gaps in aging and shrinking economies.

The paper ceiling is eroding slowly. Implementing skills-based hiring means fundamentally rethinking how to define talent. Organisations must adopt a new approach to collecting and interpreting data about people's skills—one that encourages recruiters and managers to look beyond degrees and formal qualifications. In many instances, this effort will entail a major shift in organisational culture.



Recommendations for Malaysian Employers

2 ATTRACTING TALENT



Know who to target and how to customise offers.

When it comes to the employee value proposition, one size does not fit all. The workplace attributes that people value most vary considerably depending on age, region, job role, and so on.

Employers can segment these priorities into personas with distinctive needs, differentiated employee value propositions, and customised recruitment journeys. It may be helpful to think of potential employees as customers, understanding the needs of different segments and adjusting the recruitment approach accordingly. By gathering data from various sources (research on talent trends, surveys of new hires, and focus groups, for example), employers can shape talent personas (senior professionals with high expectations, for example, or young digital experts) and then reimagine the recruitment journey to make it optimally attractive to each persona.

Employers can also identify and emphasise the characteristics that make their organisation unique and that match the expectations of their target segments. Salary is important, of course, but it isn't everything. Employers that can't compete on financials can still win over talent with opportunities for learning, good relationships at work, a healthy work-life balance, or positive societal impact. Showcasing AI readiness can be another point of attraction for talent, as a study by The Stepstone Group has shown.



Modernise and personalise recruitment.

The recruitment process matters to workers. Ensuring a responsive, smooth, fair process is essential, and technology can help if used properly. As The Stepstone Group has reported, companies and job boards are already augmenting traditional recruitment processes with AI, such as in creating job posts, personalising applications for specific jobs, and handling intelligent interview scheduling. AI can also help to enhance communication with candidates by providing timely, context-specific updates throughout the recruitment process to keep candidates informed and engaged.

Recommendations for Malaysian Employers

Attracting talent is an increasingly demanding task, but automation could save recruiters 10 to 12 hours weekly, according to a recent study by The Stepstone Group. Organisations can use GenAI tools to improve the efficiency of the hiring process so that candidates and employers can focus on the human interaction. A BCG research has shown that personal contact remains imperative. Job seekers want to judge an organisation's culture when talking to interviewers, and they want to test shared values and chemistry with their prospective managers throughout the interview process.

3 DEVELOPING TALENT



Shift from traditional training to strategic skilling.

Faced with rapid advances in technology, shortages of talent, and major changes in the way people work, employers must shift from traditional training methods to strategic upskilling and reskilling. Recent research by BCG and Harvard Business Review found that five paradigm shifts are necessary for such a change. These include ensuring that skilling programmes closely align with business goals, that business leaders (besides HR) champion them, and that the organisation provides various incentives and enablers for programme participants and their managers.

Organisations must also shift the narrative from “learning as an expense” to “skill building as an investment” and ensure that employees can take sufficient time to pursue needed learning. Organisations that embrace this new approach to skilling will win the allegiance of employees who seek job security and opportunities for learning and development. Employers do not have to do this alone: they can collaborate with educational institutions, other employers, trade unions, and other stakeholders to build and run such programmes.

Recommendations for Malaysian Employers



Enhance GenAI adoption at work.

Although many workers are experimenting with GenAI, fewer are truly adopting it. This situation seems to be especially common in Western markets, which trail emerging economies in the use of GenAI. To capture the full value of GenAI, more workers should be able to use the technology for advanced tasks that have a real impact on their work.

Organisations can adopt several practices to support this shift. Employers could start by showcasing the benefits and potential use cases of AI. Then, as our respondents mentioned, workers need to know what skills they should learn. Guided learning platforms can provide personalised, relevant training customised to individual employees. Employees also need high-quality learning programmes, ideally integrated into their workflow, with real-life examples and applications. Finally, strong leadership support is critical to inspire adoption—it's the key people-related factor that differentiates top performers in GenAI.



Recommendations for Malaysian Employers

4 ENGAGING TALENT



Help employees process and manage uncertainty.

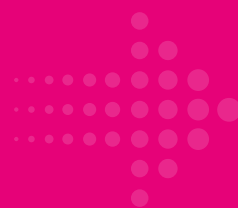
Doing so starts with fostering open and transparent communication about the company's future and the likely impact of technology and other megatrends. They should engage employees in discussions and planning.

To retain and optimally leverage talent, and to give employees a long-term perspective on their careers, organisations can establish a robust internal job mobility system. By proactively identifying and training employees for relevant future roles, companies can reassure employees about their future within the organisation. Finally, services to support mental health and well-being are an increasingly important and clearly articulated need of workers; the lack of such services is the second-most frequently-cited dealbreaker in our research. Access to professionals and personalised content on topics such as stress management, psychological safety, and emotional well-being shouldn't be seen as merely a "nice to have" anymore.



Help people find joy in their work.

People care a lot about work-life balance, relationships, and working for an employer that has a positive impact on society. Employees who enjoy their work are 49% less likely to seek new employment than those who don't. If used judiciously, GenAI can help, improving workloads and engagement by automating nonessential tasks and thereby enabling people to reallocate their time towards more satisfying and meaningful activities. Of course, technology alone can't optimise a company's culture. Establishing flexible policies on working hours and having managers who support a healthy work-life balance, promote learning and development, and foster good relationships at work are equally critical.



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