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THE TRUE PURPOSE OF WORK REVEALED: 98% OF MALAYSIANS WANT MEANING AT WORK

Malaysia (April 25, 2024) - 98% of Malaysians say that meaning at work is important to them, and more than half (55%) are planning to take action to achieve it. The study, released today by Job_that_makesense Asia and global recruitment agency Manpower, was primarily conducted on working adults and a smaller group of tertiary students (2%) poised to enter the workforce.

The report, titled 'The Quest for Meaning at Work', is the very first Southeast Asia-focused research survey on the pursuit of meaning at work. The report examines the responses of 2,023 (211 in Malaysia) participants from six major Southeast Asian countries to determine what meaningful work is for the workforce of today.

When looking for a new job, 45% of the respondents in Malaysia have identified salary and job stability as their top priorities. Over one in four (27%) respondents said that maintaining a positive work-life balance is becoming increasingly important for professional fulfillment. The pursuit of a high salary is not motivated by the pursuit of material wealth, but rather by the desire to provide comfort and security for one's family.

Unfortunately, the report shows less than one in three (27%) of Malaysia respondents are "very satisfied" with the level of meaning in their current role. This is a significant opportunity for organizations to address this issue and stand out in our tight labor market.

MALAYSIA FINDINGS

- 98% of respondents in Malaysia indicated that having meaning at work was important to them. Less than one in three (27%) of Malaysia respondents indicated they currently feel "very satisfied" with their current level of meaning at work.
- While the majority (79%) of Malaysian respondents believe that any job can contribute to the betterment of society and the planet, 55% of them are contemplating a career change to actively pursue this purpose. High levels of satisfaction are reported by 93% of those who have already made the transition.

- When considering a new job, Malaysian participants prioritize salary and job stability above all else, with 45% citing this as the primary determining factor. The next most important are work-life balance (27%) and opportunities for career growth and personal development (27%).
- For job seekers, a company's reputation, particularly in social responsibility, is crucial. In fact, 90% of Malaysian respondents indicate that a company's reputation in these areas significantly contributes to their decision to pursue employment with them. This is much higher than the SEA's average of 77%.

SOUTHEAST ASIA (SEA) FINDINGS:

- 98% of participants surveyed from six key SEA countries indicated that having meaning at work was important to them. Only one in five (21%) of SEA respondents indicated they currently feel “very satisfied” with their current level of meaning at work.
- More than half of SEA respondents expect their companies to take a leading role in promoting sustainability initiatives. They also advocate for the creation of more positions dedicated to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) responsibilities and the provision of learning programs for employees that focus on societal impact and sustainability.
- While the majority (86%) of SEA respondents believe that any job can contribute to the betterment of society and the planet, 53% of them are contemplating a career change to actively pursue this purpose. Impressively, 84% of those who have already made the transition report high levels of satisfaction.
- The significance of a company's reputation, particularly in social responsibility, has become a critical factor for job seekers. In fact, 77% of SEA respondents indicate that a company's reputation in these areas significantly contributes to their decision to pursue employment with them.
- Respondents expect their companies and employers to balance improvements in workplace conditions with a commitment to broader societal well-being. More than seven out of ten respondents agreed enhancing working conditions with flexible hours, comprehensive health insurance and equal pay (74%), and advocacy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and other social causes (72%) are actions organizations could implement to enhance their meaning at work.

Jobs that make sense Asia CEO, Ms. Léa Klein, said that over the past three years, we have witnessed a significant shift in this area.



“We are seeing a distinct shift towards integrating sustainable practices into various job roles, which is a positive development.”

“To meet our region's sustainability targets by 2030, we must accelerate the momentum we are seeing in this space. The workforce is increasingly committed to sustainability and DEIB practices, necessitating the expansion of sustainability-driven roles and upskilling programs. By mainstreaming sustainability across all levels of companies, these positions will become the new norm, ensuring the success of the entire region,” Ms Klein said.

ManpowerGroup’s Regional President of Asia Pacific and Middle East, Mr. Francois Lancon, said this research is closely aligned to ManpowerGroup’s vision that meaningful and sustainable employment has the power to change the world.

“It is encouraging to see the findings of this report align with our own core belief that meaningful work is a key driver of employee happiness, health and productivity,” Mr. Lancon said.

“Today, as the acceleration of automation, a greater focus on ESG, and the emergence of generative AI reshapes industries and economies, organizations have more ability than ever to create opportunities for people to engage in purposeful and fulfilling work.”

“While ManpowerGroup is committed to identifying and building talent with the right skills to succeed in these new roles, business leaders must have the courage to create opportunities that deliver the type of meaning today’s workforce craves,” Mr. Lancon said.

ManpowerGroup’s Country Manager for Malaysia, Mr Sanjoy Ghose, said, “This has wide-ranging transformative potential and shows that employees want meaning at work not only to enhance their own lives and their families' lives, but also to contribute to the betterment of society as a whole. It's unfortunate that only 27% of Malaysian respondents are very satisfied with the level of meaning in their current role.”

“I view this as an opportunity. Here, at ManpowerGroup Malaysia, we offer an in-house training program for our client employees that provides trainees with a better understanding of ESG and coaches them on how they can contribute more effectively to corporate initiatives. We also offer completion certifications to graduates that they can use to build their personal brand. This training when done in conjunction with organizations that engage their employees well in their ESG initiatives is powerful, improves the meaning of work, and helps companies achieve their goals.”

“As leaders, we have the opportunity to bring about meaningful change here!”

To view complete results for the Jobs_that_makesense Asia – Manpower’s The Quest for Meaning at Work Survey, visit:
https://www.manpower.com.my/purpose_at_work_southeast_asia_report



ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Jobs_that_makesense Asia – Manpower’s The Quest for Meaning at Work Survey (Southeast Asia) marks the inaugural research endeavor delving into the sentiments of professionals from Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand. Its aim is to construct a regionally focused definition of the pursuit of meaning in individuals’ professional journeys, highlighting their personal and collective motivations to achieve purpose-driven careers.

ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted across six countries (Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand), offering participants the choice to respond in English, Thai, or Vietnamese. A total of 2,023 individuals took part in the survey, which was administered in March 2024. Respondents represented diverse sectors and demographics, spanning from small to large organizations, encompassing both nonprofit and corporate sectors. The majority of participants hailed from the for-profit industry.

ABOUT JOBS_THAT_MAKESENSE ASIA

[Jobs that makesense Asia](https://www.jobsthatmakesense.asia) serves as the Southeast Asia arm of Jobs_that_makesense, a platform committed to nurturing careers that drive societal and environmental progress. Since its inception in 2020, Jobs_that_makesense has operated a job board facilitating access to opportunities within the green and social sectors. It also documents the local sector landscape and lists curriculum programs, empowering professionals to embark on purposeful careers. Over the past three years, Jobs_that_makesense has attracted over 2 million visitors annually, enabling them to explore diverse opportunities. Additionally, it has assisted more than 7,000 green and socially driven companies in connecting with talented individuals. For more information about Jobs_that_Makesense, visit www.jobsthatmakesense.asia

ABOUT MANPOWER

[Manpower](https://www.manpower.com.my)®, part of the [ManpowerGroup](https://www.manpowergroup.com)® (NYSE: MAN) family of companies, is a global leader in contingent staffing and permanent resourcing, providing companies with strategic and operational flexibility and creating talent at scale. Our talent agents and specialized recruiters leverage data-driven insights to assess, guide and place people into meaningful, sustainable employment, and our PowerSuite® tech platform enables assessment and matching to predict performance potential. Our Manpower MyPath® skilling program provides rapid skills development at scale with on-the-job training, market-based certifications, and coaching for roles in growth sectors. In this constantly shifting world, our flexible workforce solutions provide companies with the business agility needed to succeed. For more information about Manpower, visit www.manpower.com.my

ABOUT MANPOWERGROUP

ManpowerGroup® (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing, and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful, sustainable employment for millions of people across a wide range of industries and skills. Our expert family of brands – Manpower, Experis, and Talent Solutions – creates substantially more



value for candidates and clients across more than 70 countries and territories and has done so for 75 years. We are recognized consistently for our diversity – as a best place to work for Women, Inclusion, Equality, and Disability, and in 2024 ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the 15th time – all confirming our position as the brand of choice for in-demand talent. For more information, visit www.manpowergroup.com