



AmChamSG

SINGAPORE

2025 MANPOWER SURVEY RESULTS

Taming the Algorithm: Staying Ahead in the Age of AI

Building the future-ready workforce

Imagine a workforce where every piece fits — by design.

Success depends on how we rethink work. It means using AI and smarter design to do more with less. And getting the right people, in the right roles, at the right time to build an agile workforce ready for tomorrow.

Attracting top talent requires embracing change. Keeping your people engaged and growing so they contribute their best. Recognising talent amid disruption by optimising total rewards. At the core, HR becomes a strategic powerhouse, orchestrating the pieces to create a resilient picture.

When every piece fits, the future isn't just built — **it's built to last.**



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INTRODUCTION

Singapore continues to demonstrate resilience and adaptability amid a dynamic global environment. While the nation remains a leading hub for business and innovation, companies are navigating an increasingly complex landscape shaped by economic uncertainty, technological disruption, and evolving workforce expectations. These factors are influencing talent strategies and prompting organizations to rethink how they attract, retain, and develop their people.

In September 2025, the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore (AmChamSG) conducted its annual Manpower Survey to capture the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities in workforce management. This year's findings reveal encouraging progress in several areas. Local talent availability and a business-friendly regulatory environment are key factors that influence the choice of Singapore as a market for continued investment. Companies report positive increases in the implementation of flexible benefits and workplace health programs. Reductions in critical skill gaps among mid-level local talent—including creativity, adaptability, entrepreneurial thinking, and communication skills position a promising pipeline of future leaders. Confidence in local Institutes of Higher Learning remains strong, and employers continue to leverage the COMPASS Framework effectively, with lower rates of Employment Pass rejections and greater clarity when rejections occur.

Despite these gains, new challenges are emerging. The percentage of companies planning to reduce headcount has doubled over the past year, and nearly half anticipate some job displacement due to artificial intelligence (AI); within the next two years. While Singaporeans and PRs are stepping in to take on more regional roles, the number of Singaporeans in senior leadership roles has declined and limited exposure to overseas markets—is now identified as the top barrier for aspiring leaders.

Looking ahead, sustained collaboration between the public and private sectors will be critical to addressing these challenges and building a competitive talent ecosystem. Key imperatives include:

- Expanding opportunities for overseas exposure to prepare local talent for regional and global leadership roles.
- Continuing to invest in reskilling and capability-building to maintain progress in closing technical and soft skill gaps.
- Supporting workforce resilience and adaptability in the face of technological change and economic uncertainty.

As of 2025, more than 5,700 American companies operate in Singapore, underscoring their confidence in the nation's long-term prospects. By continuing to foster innovation, flexibility, and inclusivity in talent strategies, Singapore can further strengthen its position as a global business hub and ensure sustainable growth in an era of rapid transformation.

INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

This section explores company initiatives and challenges in building an inclusive workforce, including flexible work arrangements, diversity, and support for underrepresented groups.

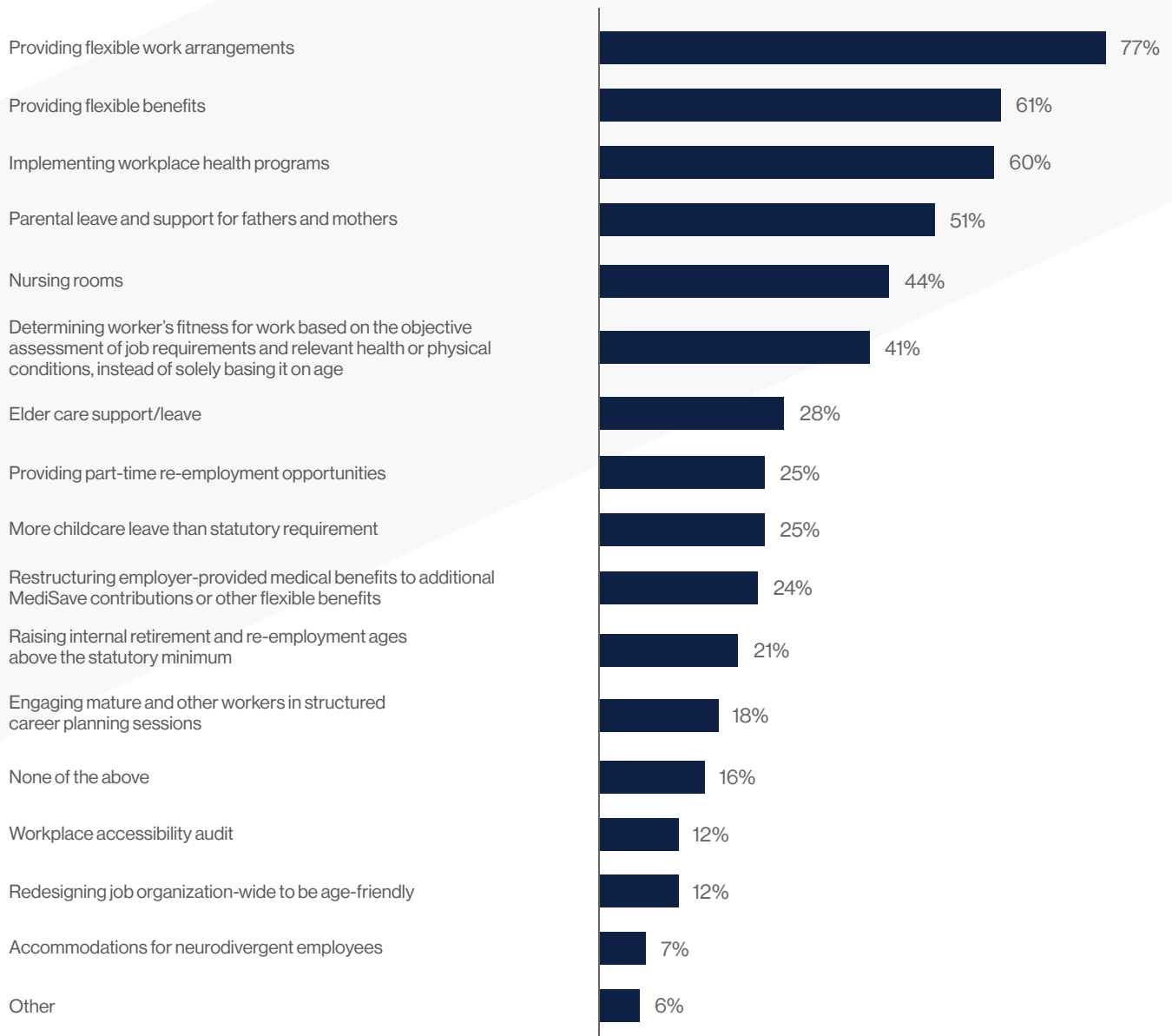
KEY FINDING 1

Flexible work arrangements are provided by most companies; flexible benefits have seen a significant increase this year.

Nearly 77% of companies now offer flexible work arrangements, with a significant year-on-year increase in flexible benefits (up to 61%) and workplace health programs (60%). Parental leave and support for both fathers and mothers are provided by over half of respondents, and the availability of nursing rooms, while slightly lower compared to last year, remains a focus area.

Figure 1. Measures taken by company to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace

Q: Which, if any, of the following measures does your company currently have in place to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace?
Select all that apply or none. (n=116)



KEY FINDING 2

Awareness of SG Enable has remained on par with last year, but companies continue to report low utilization around government programs to support inclusivity for persons with disabilities.

Awareness of SG Enable remains steady, but actual utilization of government programs supporting persons with disabilities is low (only 9% have used such programs).

Figure 2. Familiarity with SG Enable

Q: Are you familiar with SG Enable? (n=99)

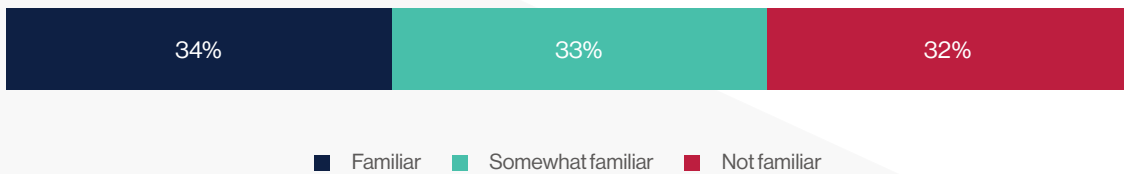
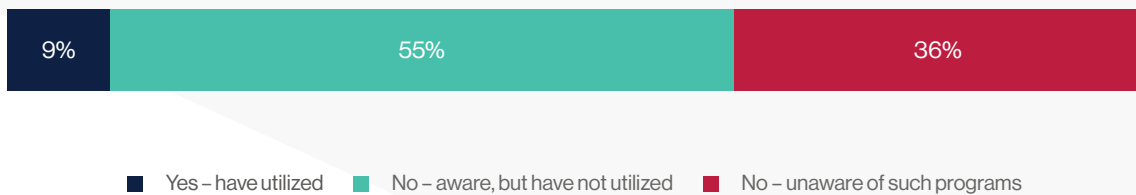


Figure 3. Utilization of government programs or funding to support employment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Q: Has your company utilized any government programs or funding to support employment of PWDs? (n=100)



HYBRID WORKFORCE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Here, we examine trends in hybrid work models and the evolving impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on workforce structure and job functions.

KEY FINDING 3

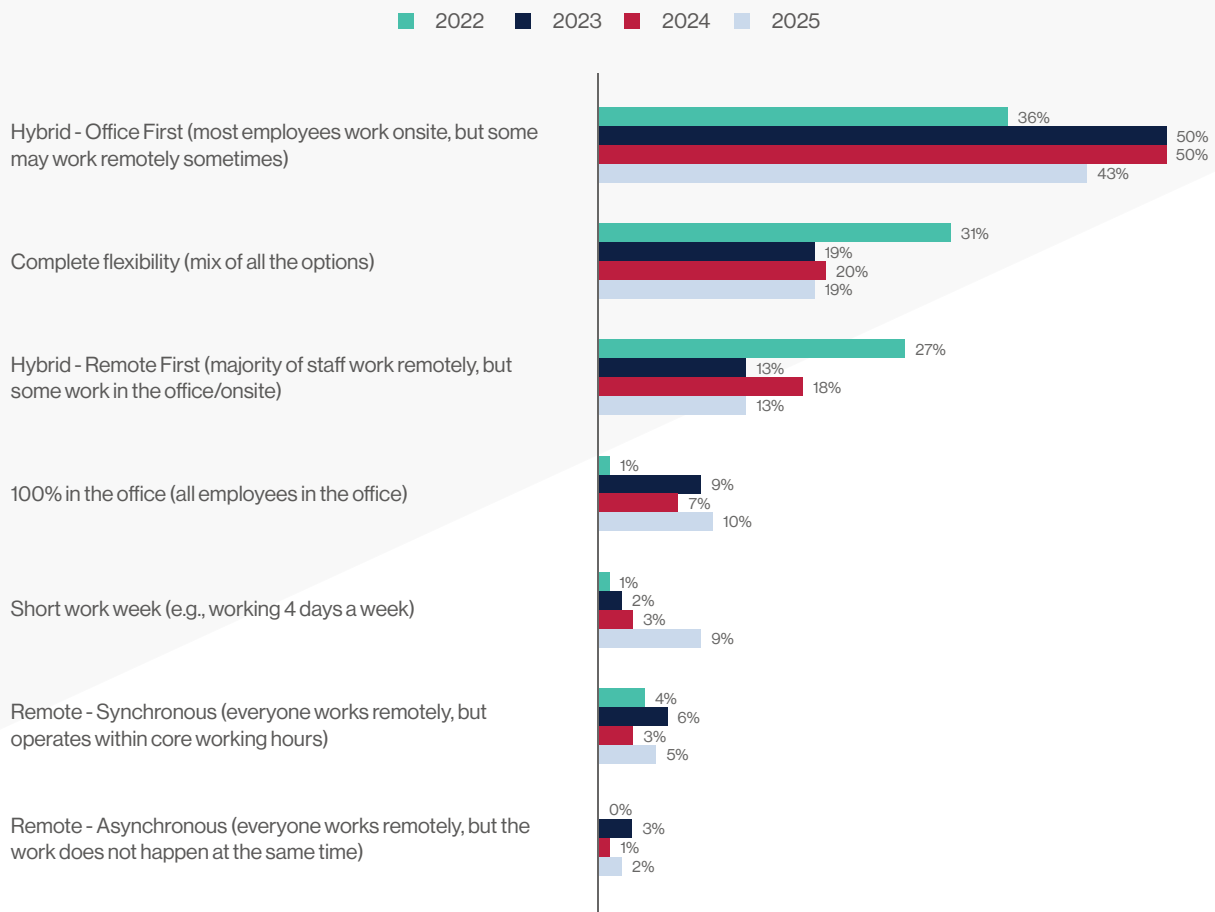
There is an increase in number of people working a short work week, and a decrease in Hybrid–Office First mode of working, although it continues to be the most preferred.

The “Hybrid–Office First” model remains the most common, though its prevalence has decreased slightly.

Figure 4. Current preferred modes of working in your organization

Q: What is the current preferred mode of working in your organization? (n=102)

*2022 data taken from CCL's Work 3.0 research report, (n=86)



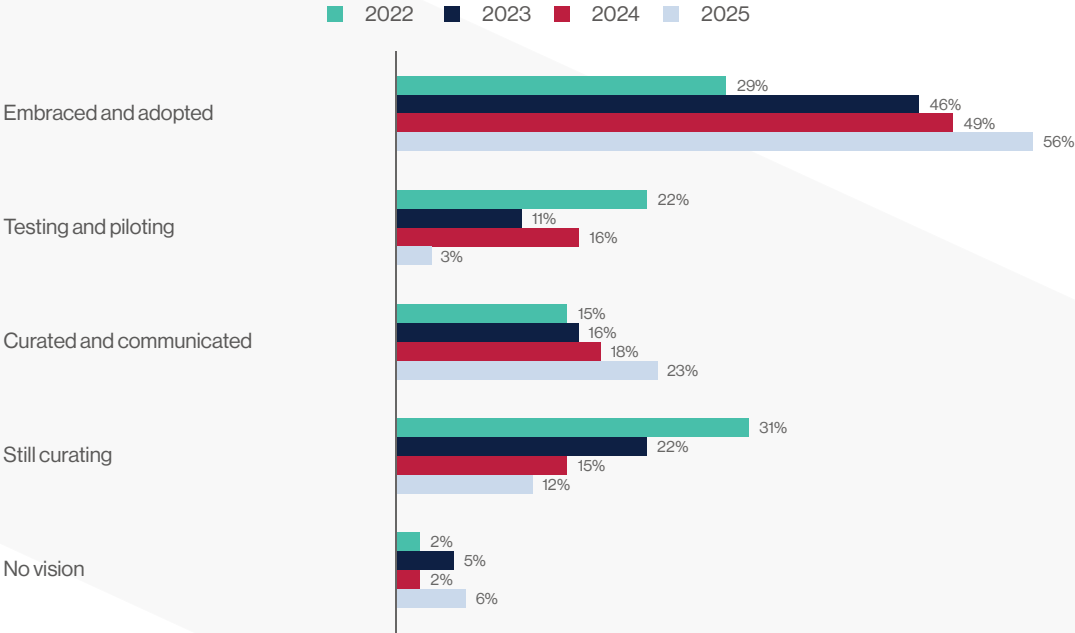
KEY FINDING 4

More organizations have moved to embracing and adopting visions and policies on hybrid work.

There is a marked increase in organizations piloting or adopting hybrid work policies, with 56% having fully embraced such models.

Figure 5. Adaptation of vision and processes/policies in terms of hybrid and/or flexible work arrangements

Q: Where is your organization on the journey towards long-term vision and associated processes/policies with respect to hybrid and/or flexible work arrangements? (n=101)
 *2022 data taken from CCL's Work 3.0 research report, (n=86)



KEY FINDING 5

With a positive shift of both mindset and skill sets, more colleagues and peers are seen as Hopefuls and Champions of hybrid work environments.

Along with companies offering flexible work arrangements, there exists both the right mindset and skill sets for the hybrid and/or flexible working environment. More than half of colleagues and peers are viewed as Champions, leaders who have embraced the hybrid and/or flexible work model and champion it internally.

Figure 6. Stance on colleagues and peers' mindset and skills towards a hybrid and/or flexible work arrangement

Q: Do my colleagues and peers have the "right" set of skills and mindset towards a hybrid and/or flexible work arrangement? (n=101)
 *2022 data taken from CCL's Work 3.0 research report, (n=86)



Hopefuls

Leaders who believe in the power of hybrid and/or flexible work, but are working on their skills to align with new ways of work

Skeptics

Leaders who have skills, such as communication and learning agility, but are not fully convinced of the efficacy of the hybrid and/or flexible work model

Champions

Leaders who have embraced the hybrid and/or flexible work model and champion it internally

Traditionalists

Leaders with a fixed mindset who do not "buy-in" to the concept of hybrid and/or flexible work

KEY FINDING 6

The impact of AI on organizations is notable, with almost half indicating they expect some decrease in the number of jobs in the next two years.

Nearly half of companies expect some decrease in jobs due to AI in the next two years, with data analytics, customer service, and finance functions most likely to be affected.

Figure 7. Impact of AI on jobs in organizations

Q: How do you anticipate AI impacting the number of jobs in your organization over the next two years? (n=100)

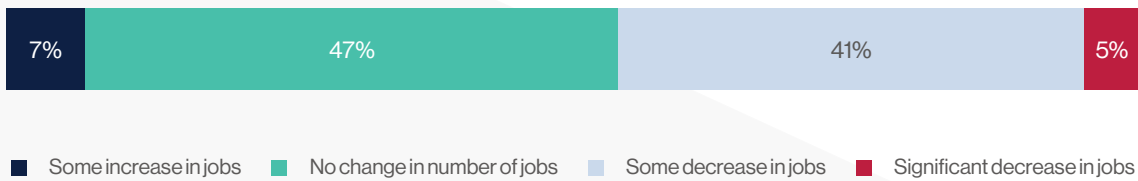
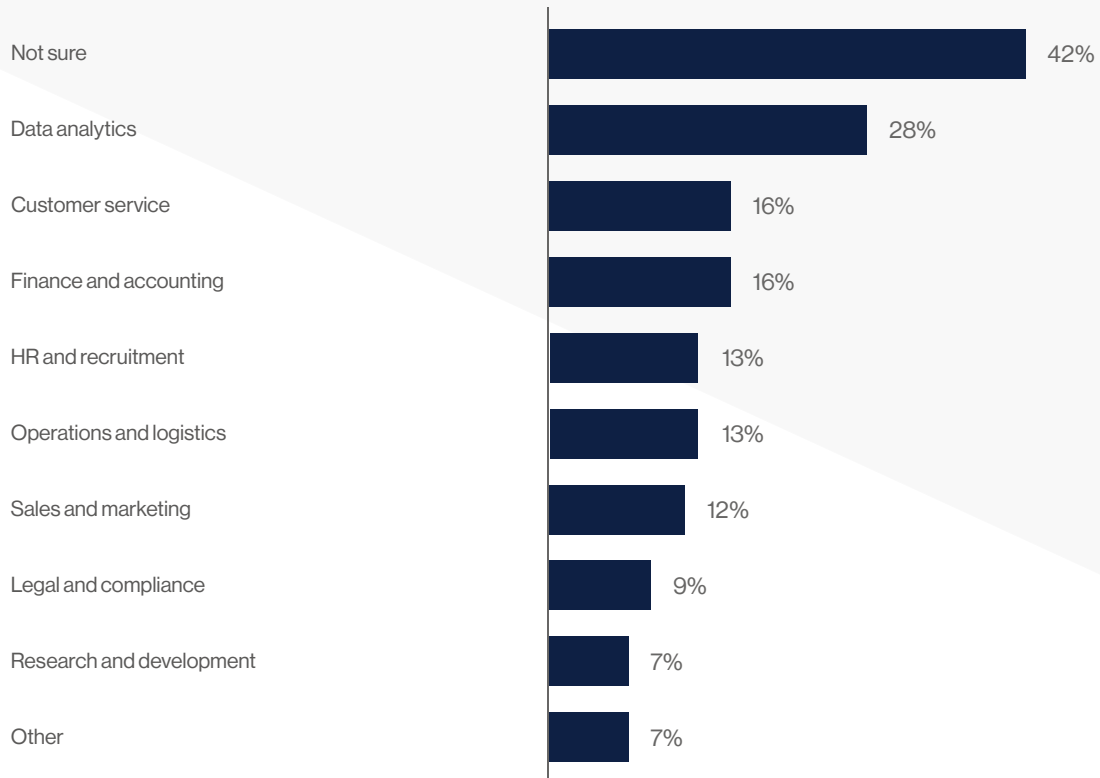


Figure 8. Job functions impacted negatively by AI

Q: Which job functions in your organization are most likely to be negatively impacted by AI in the next 1-2 years? Select all that apply. (n=116)



WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION

This section addresses the composition of the workforce, focusing on gender, nationality, and representation at various organizational levels.

KEY FINDING 7

There is a slight decrease in the number of women in the workforce, including at senior levels compared to last year.

The proportion of women in the workforce and at senior levels has stabilized after a significant post-COVID decline. With a slight decrease over the last year, both in terms of percentage of women in the workforce and at senior levels, continued focus on gender inclusion is needed.

Figure 9. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: Of your total Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are women? (n=111)
*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

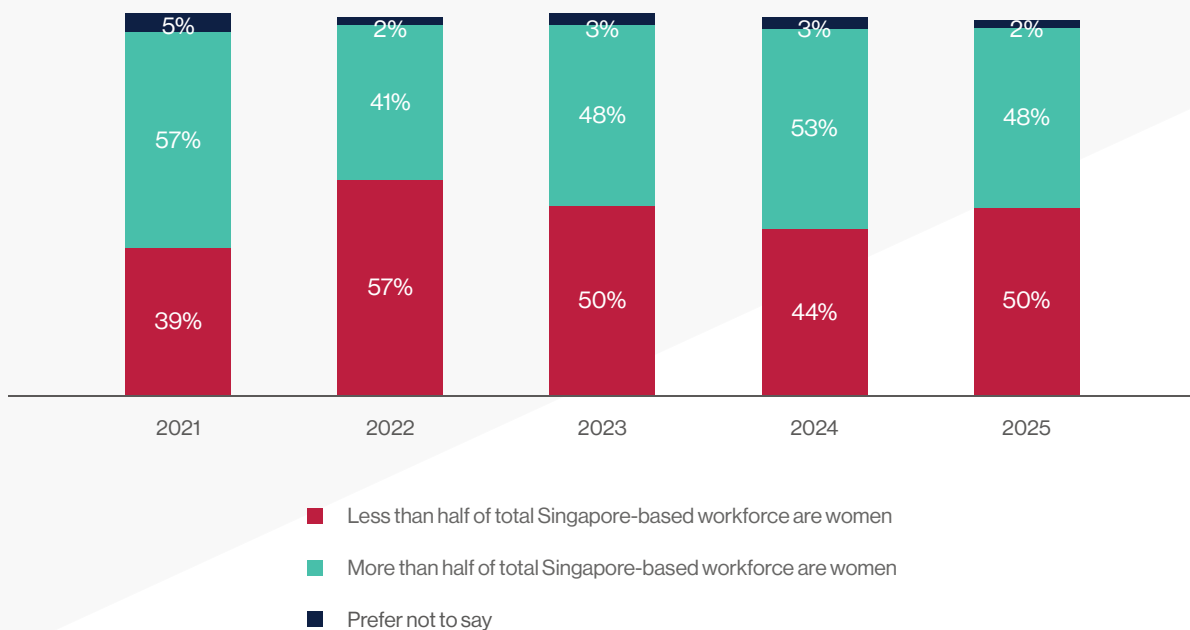
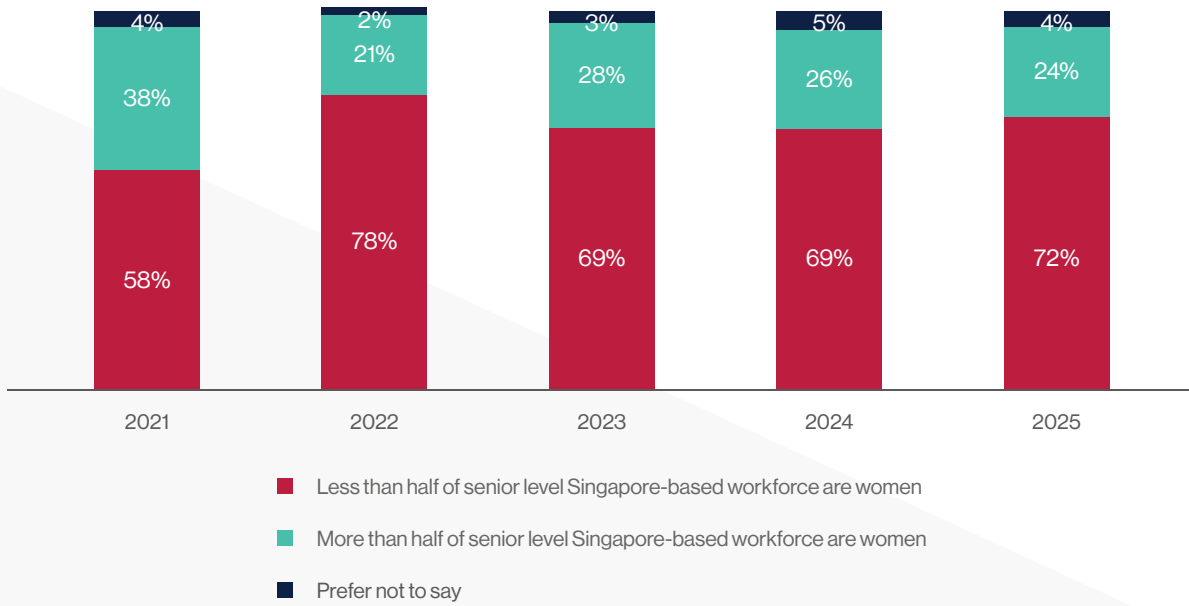


Figure 10. Proportion of total current senior level (director level or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: Of your total current senior level (director level or above) Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are women? (n=112)
 *Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



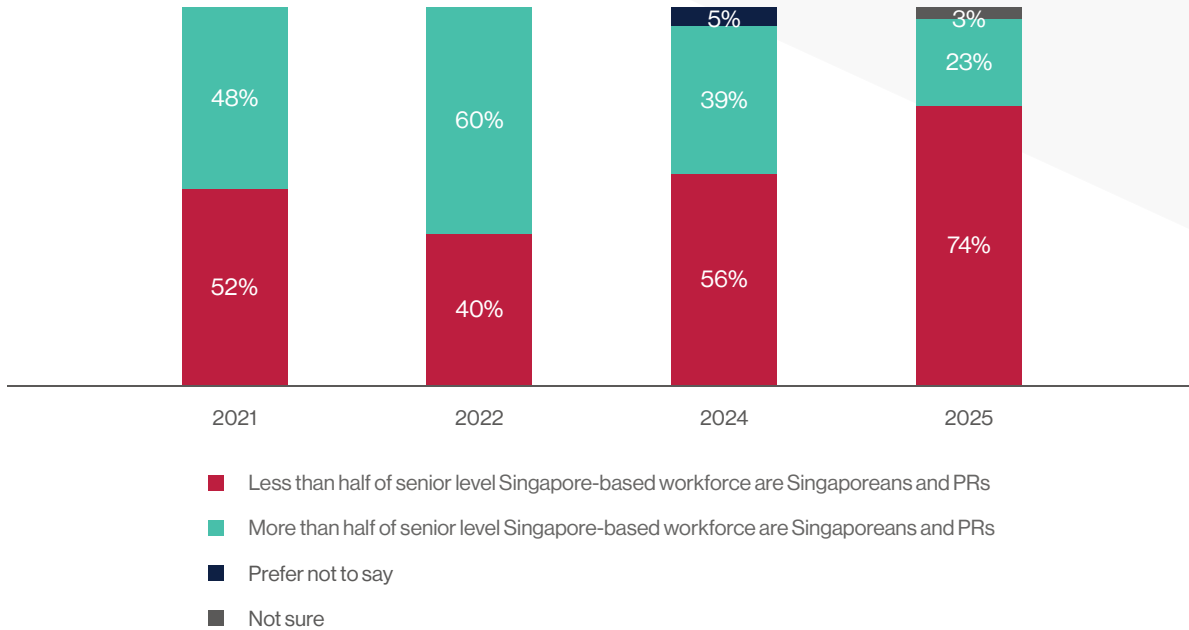
KEY FINDING 8

There is a substantial decrease in companies where Singaporeans and PRs make up more than half of their senior level workforce.

Over the last two years, we see a continued trend of fewer Singaporeans and PRs in senior level (director and above) roles. With 74% of companies having less than half of their senior level workforce made up of Singaporeans and PRs, there is still substantial progress to be made in this area.

Figure 11. Proportion of total current senior level (director level or above) Singaporean and PR workforce

Q: Of your total Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are Singaporeans and PRs in a senior level (director level or above)? (n=114)
 *Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; 2023 data has been omitted because it includes only Singaporeans.



KEY FINDING 9

While lack of exposure to regional and global leadership remains a key concern when hiring Singaporeans and PRs for senior roles, companies report an increase in Singaporeans and PRs, based in Singapore, taking on regional leadership positions over the past year.

The increase in Singaporeans and PRs, based in Singapore, in regional leadership positions, coupled with new government programs like the Overseas Market Immersion Programme (OMIP), indicates that there is a growing and healthy pipeline of Singaporeans to take on senior-level roles.

Figure 12. Biggest obstacles to hiring more Singaporeans and PRs for senior level roles (director level or above)

Q: What prevents your company from hiring more Singaporeans and PRs in senior level (director level or above) roles within Singapore? Select all that apply. (n=116)

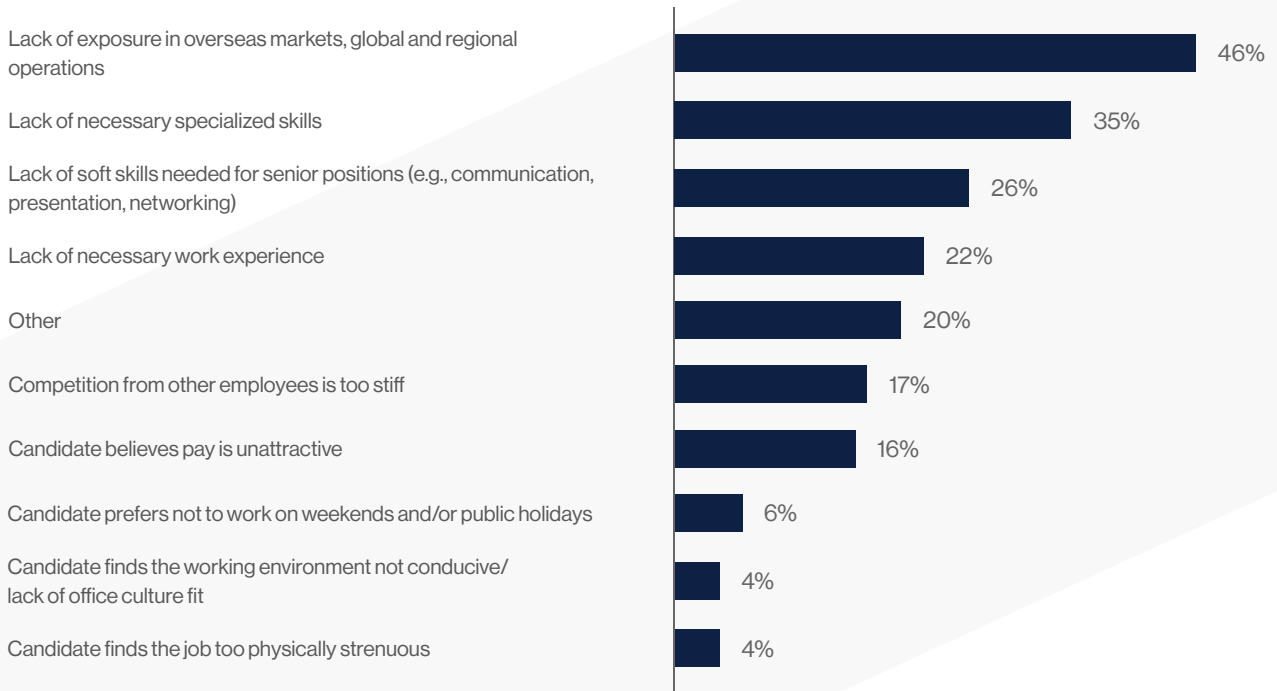
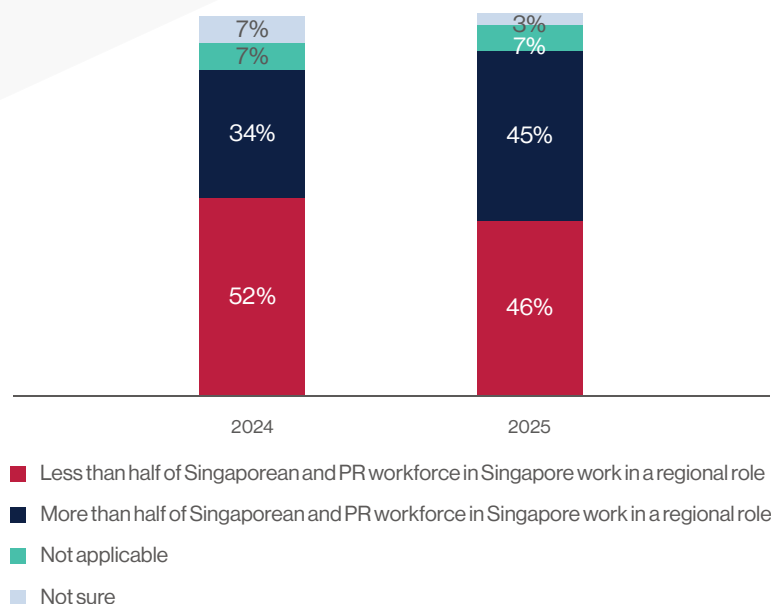


Figure 13. Proportion of total current Singaporean and PR workforce, based in Singapore, working in a regional role

Q: Of your total current Singaporean and PR workforce based in Singapore, what percentage work in a regional role? (n=116)

*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



KEY FINDING 10

While the number of Singaporeans and PRs, based in Singapore, working in regional leadership roles has increased, those taking roles in other Southeast Asia offices has remained flat.

The Singaporean and PR workforce, based in Singapore, increasingly holds regional responsibilities, with 45% of companies reporting more than half work in a regional role as compared to the previous 34%. Meanwhile, 40% of companies report that more than half of the Singapore-based workforce holds regional responsibilities.

Outside of Singapore, Southeast Asia offices remain largely locally staffed, with 36% of companies reporting less than half of their employees being Singaporean and PR, which is only a slight change from the previous year.

Figure 14. Proportion of current workforce working in regional role

Q: Of your total current workforce based in Singapore, what percentage work in a regional role? (n=116)

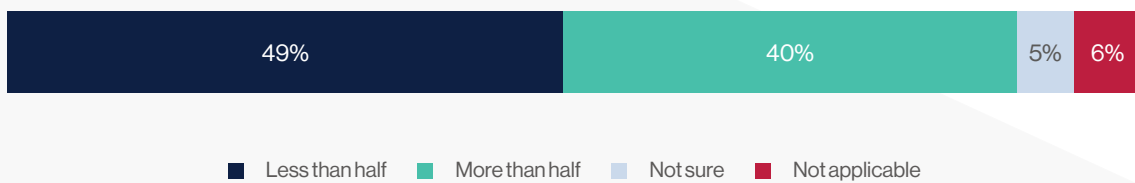
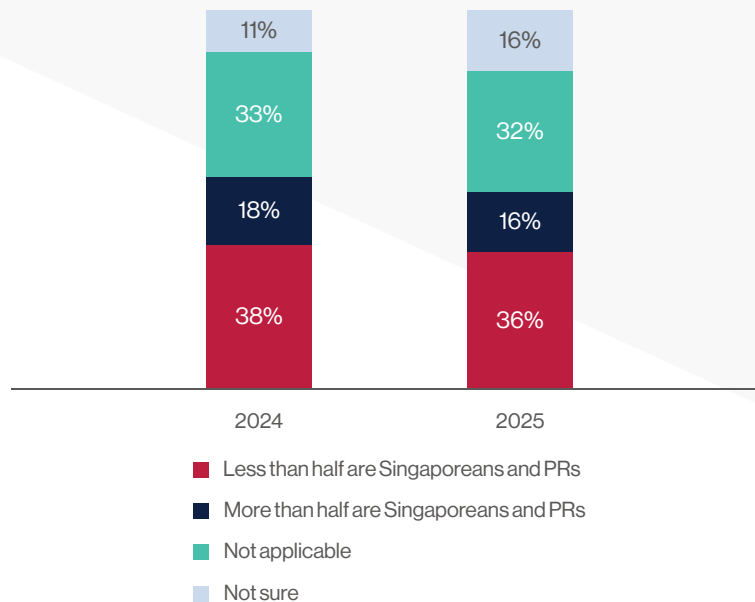


Figure 15. Proportion of Singaporean and PR workforce working in Southeast Asia (excluding Singapore)

Q: In your Southeast Asia offices, excluding Singapore, what percentage of all employees are Singaporeans and PRs? (n=116)



ATTRACTING TALENT

This section evaluates strategies, challenges, and trends in attracting and retaining talent, including skills gaps, recruitment practices, and talent development.

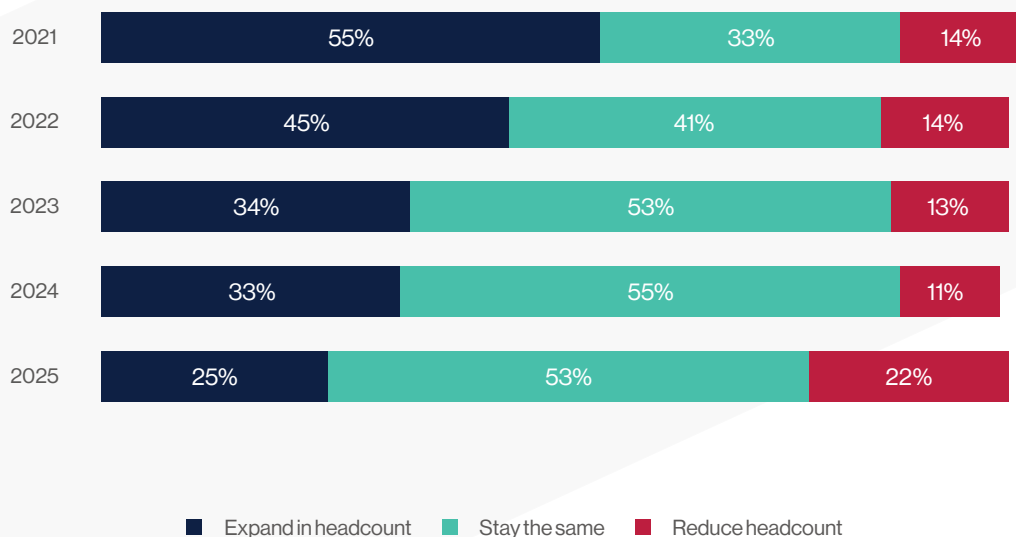
KEY FINDING 11

In the medium term, one fifth of companies plan to reduce headcount this year; up 11% from last year.

25% of companies plan to expand headcount, while 22% expect reductions—double last year's figure. The majority (53%) plan to maintain current staffing levels.

Figure 16. Outlook of companies in the medium term

Q: Given the current global situation, in the medium term, the Singapore office of my company is going to: (n=100)
*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

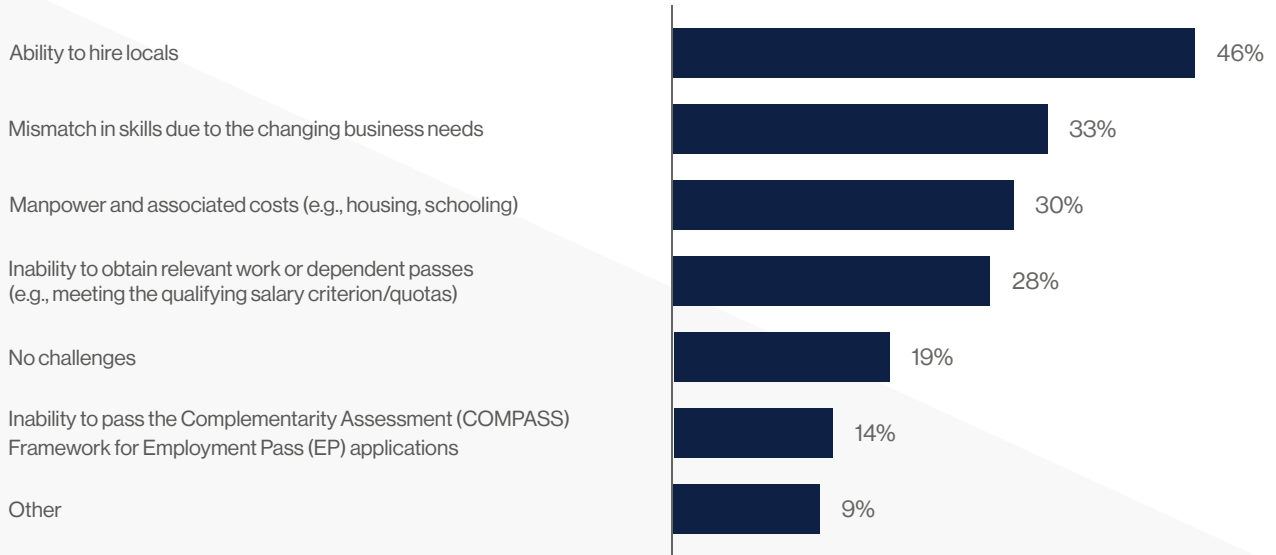


KEY FINDING 12

Manpower costs, skills mismatch, and ability to hire locals are key challenges that companies face.

Figure 17. Key manpower issues companies are facing

Q: What are the key manpower issues your company is facing? Select all that apply. (n=116)



KEY FINDING 13

Cost of living is the primary barrier for prospective employees relocating to Singapore.

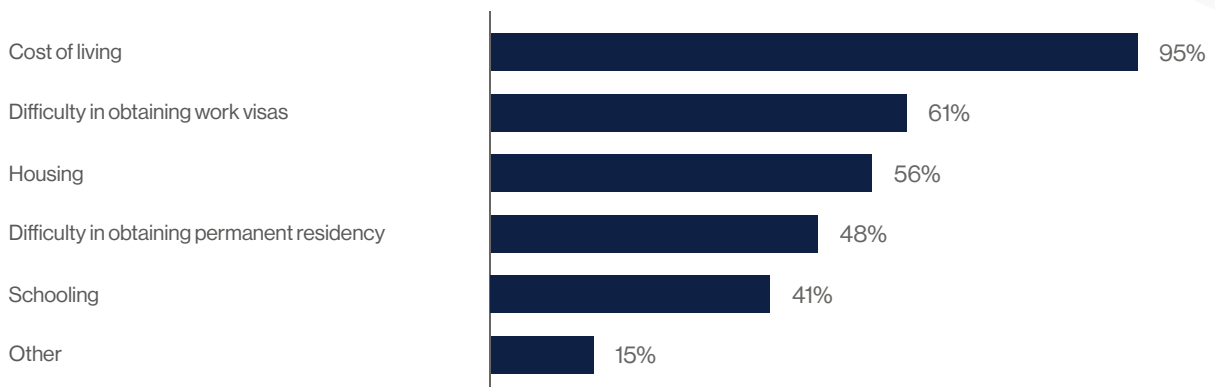
Figure 18. Presence of barriers for employees relocating to Singapore

Q: Are there any barriers that discourage prospective employees from relocating to Singapore? (n=114)



Figure 19. Barriers for employees relocating to Singapore

Q: If yes, what are some barriers that have discouraged prospective employees from relocating to Singapore? Select all that apply. (n=66)



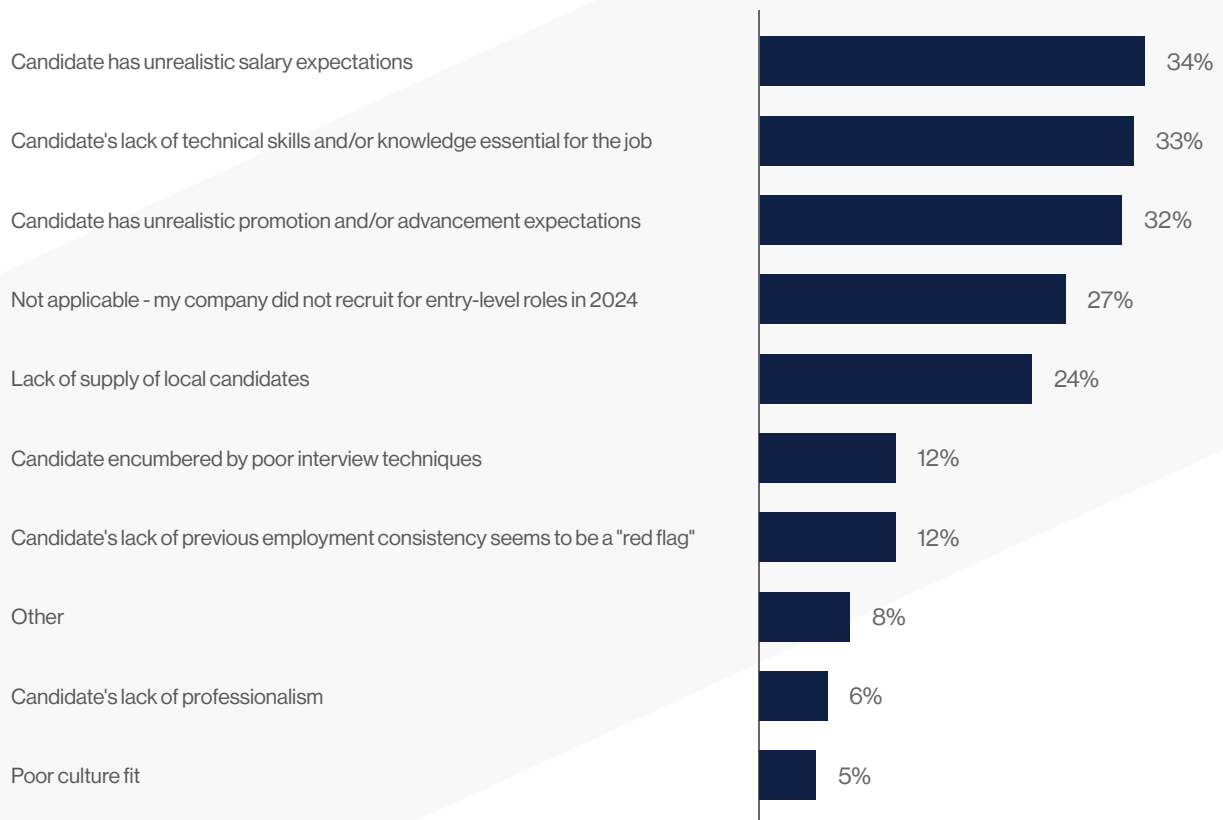
KEY FINDING 14

Employers looking to hire entry-level talent find it challenging to recruit local candidates with realistic salary, necessary technical skills and promotion expectations.

Employers report a narrowing skills gap among local entry-level candidates, but face challenges with salary and promotion expectations.

Figure 20. Biggest obstacles in recruiting entry-level Singaporeans and PRs with less than five years of experience which result in hiring foreigners for those roles

What are the difficulties in recruiting entry-level Singaporeans and PRs with less than five years of experience that result in your company hiring foreigners?
Select all that apply or not applicable. (n=116)

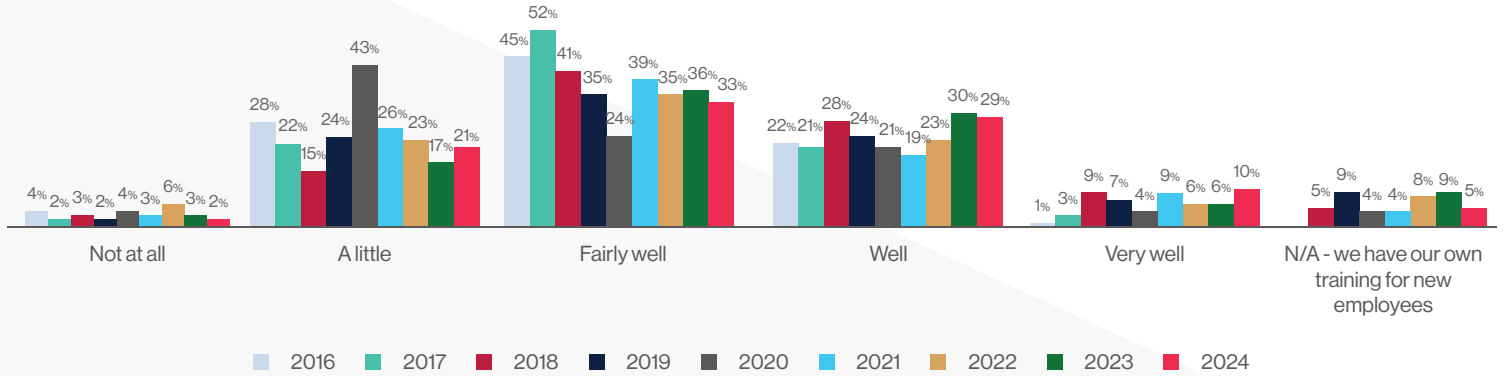


KEY FINDING 15

Companies optimism about the ability of Singaporean Institutes of High Learning to prepare graduates for the workforce is high.

Figure 21. Extent to which Singaporean Institutes of Higher Learning prepare fresh graduates (those graduated less than a year ago) for work

Q: Indicate the extent to which you think Singaporean Institutes of Higher Learning (universities, polytechnics, and ITEs) prepare fresh graduates (i.e., those who graduated less than a year ago) for work in your company. (n=114)
*2023 data includes polytechnics, ITEs and universities; pre-2023 data only includes universities.

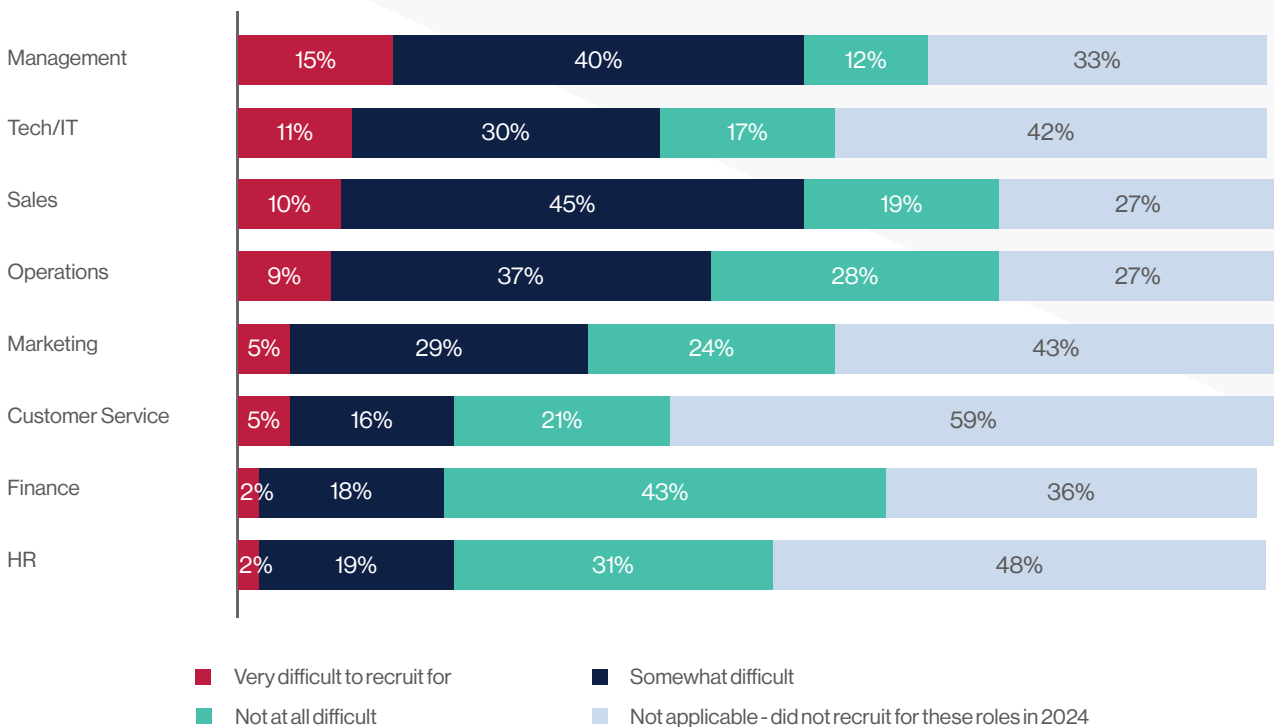


KEY FINDING 16

Management, tech/IT and sales positions are the most difficult to recruit for locally.

Figure 22. Business sectors most difficult to recruit Singaporeans and PRs for

Q: Of the business sectors here, which, if any, has your company had difficulty in recruiting Singaporeans and PRs for in 2024? (n=110)
*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



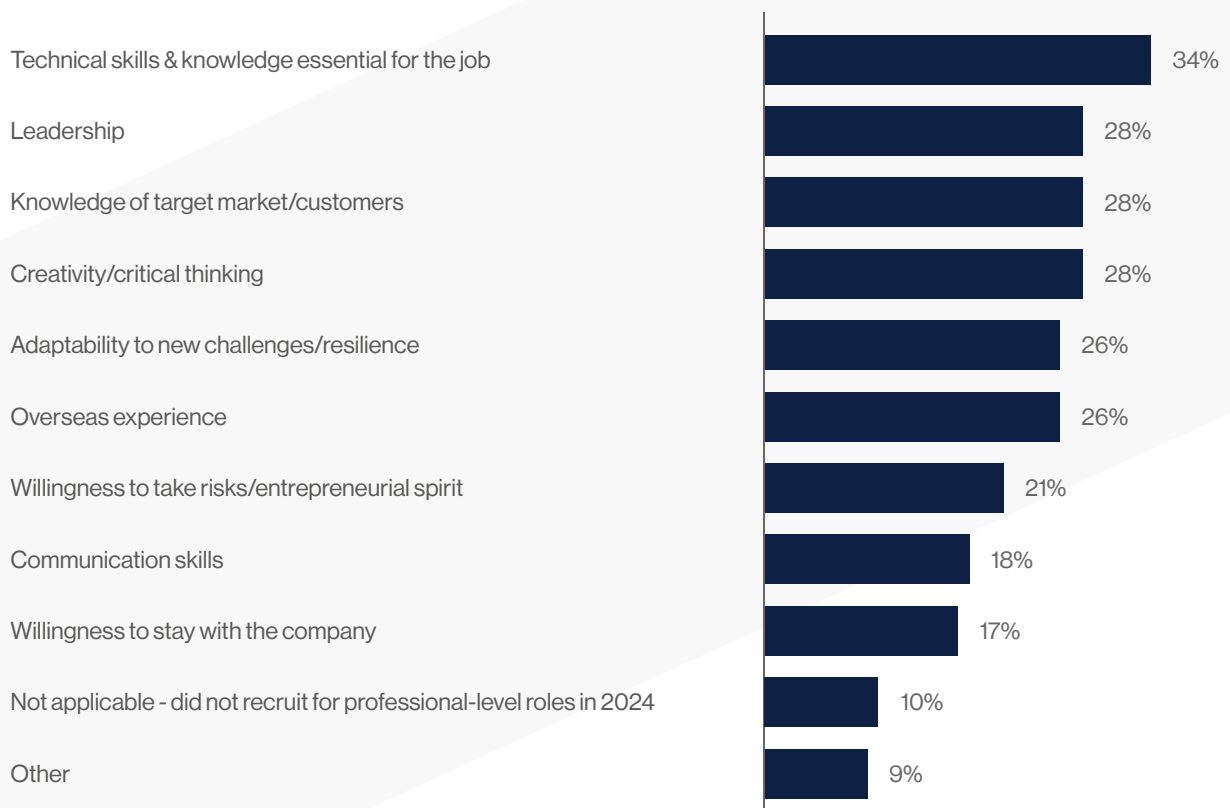
KEY FINDING 17

Specialized technical skills and knowledge is the #1 reason to hire foreigners with more than five years of experience.

Employers face ongoing challenges recruiting local mid-to-senior level talent due to gaps in technical skills and leadership abilities. Skill sets and attributes such as adaptability, creativity, critical thinking, and risk-taking have improved significantly compared to last year, indicating progress and fewer gaps for employers seeking to fill higher-level roles with local candidates.

Figure 23. Skill sets and/or attributes difficult to find among Singaporean and PR professionals with more than five years of experience, which result in hiring foreigners for those roles

Q: What are the skillsets and/or attributes that are difficult to find among Singaporean and PR professionals with more than five years of experience that specifically result in your company hiring foreigners for those roles? Select all that apply or not applicable. (n=116)

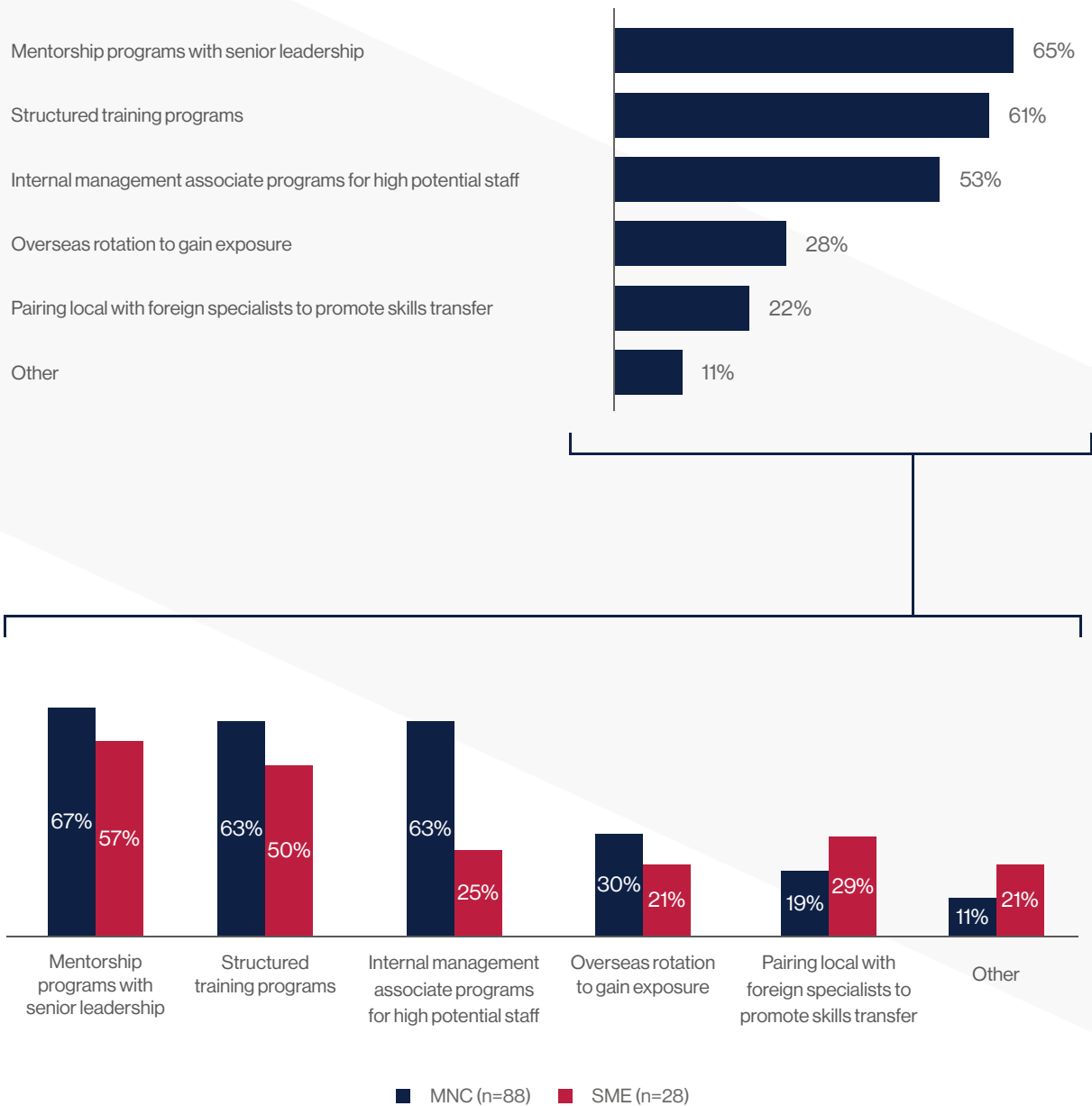


KEY FINDING 18

Companies are continuing to pair structured training programs (internal and external) with mentorship program to develop the local workforce. Multinational Corporations (MNCs) use internal management associate programs while Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) pair local talent with foreign specialists to promote skill transfer.

Figure 24. Investment in training and development of local workforce

Q: How does your organization invest in the training and development of your local workforce? Select all that apply. (n=116)

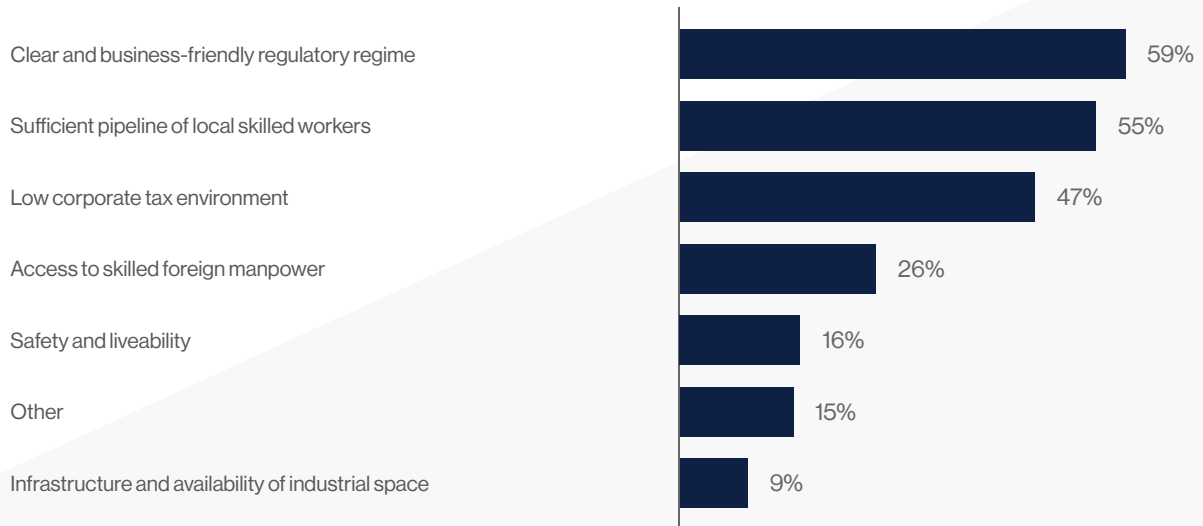


KEY FINDING 19

Local talent availability and business friendly regulatory environment continue to be key factors that influence the choice of Singapore as a market for continued investment.

Figure 25. Factors influencing investment growth in Singapore

Q: What are the top three factors that will influence your organization's decision to grow your investments in Singapore as opposed to diverting to other markets? Choose your top three choices. (n=116)



WORK PASS APPLICATIONS

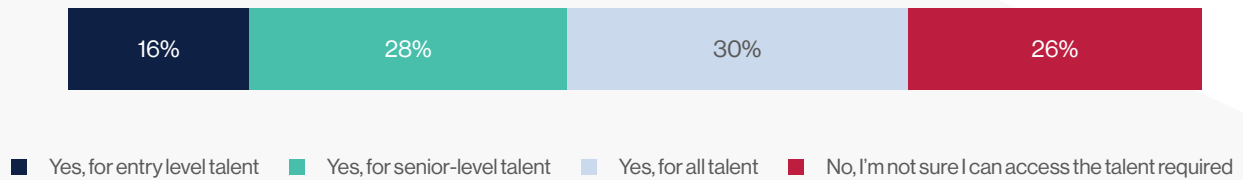
This section covers experiences and perspectives on work pass applications, regulatory frameworks, and the impact of government policies on talent mobility.

KEY FINDING 20

Three-fourths of companies are confident that they will be able to access required talent under the COMPASS Framework.

Figure 26. Confidence in COMPASS Framework

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "I am confident that my business will be able to access the talent it requires to succeed under COMPASS.?" (n=114)

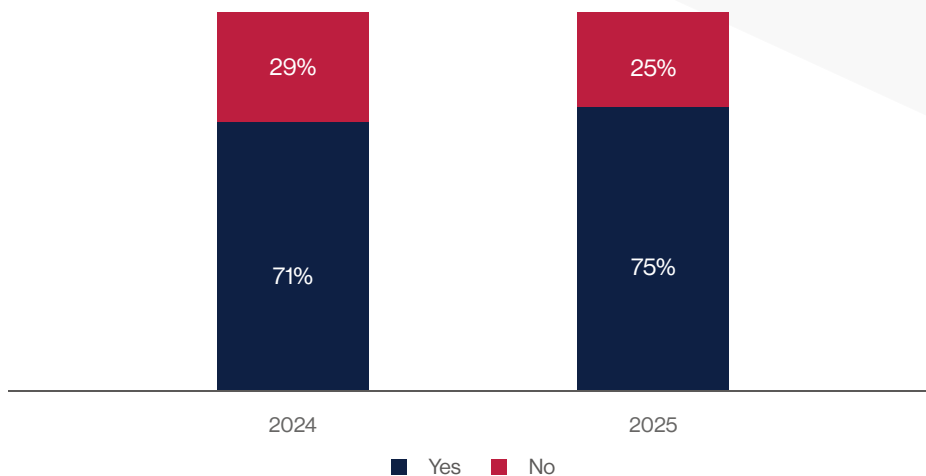


KEY FINDING 21

75% of companies report feeling supported by the government programs to meet their local manpower requirements.

Figure 27. Government support for businesses to meet local manpower requirements

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "There is sufficient government support to help my business meet my local manpower requirements (e.g., career conversion programs, government matching services).?" (n=111)

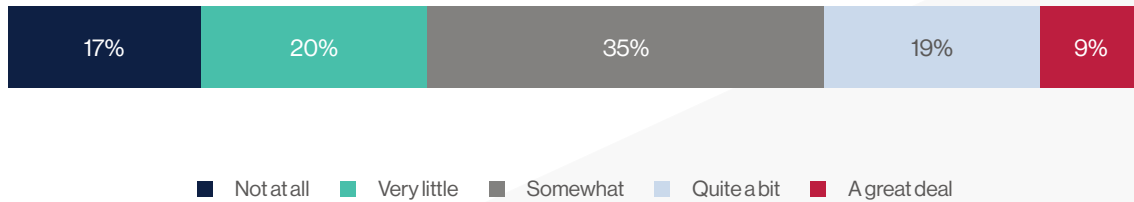


KEY FINDING 22

Companies are not feeling the impact of increases in Employment Pass (EP) and S Pass qualifying salaries on pass renewals as much as last year.

Figure 28. Impact of changes to EP and S Pass holders

Q: Does the increase in minimum qualifying salary for EP and S Pass holders impact the renewal of EP and S Pass holders? (n=99)



KEY FINDING 23

9 in 10 companies are aware of specialized work passes and more than 7 in 10 companies view the ONE pass, PEP, and Tech.Pass as useful to attract global top talent.

Figure 29. Awareness of specialized work passes

Q: Beyond the Employment Pass, are you aware of the suite of specialized work passes (including the Personalized Employment Pass, EntrePass, and Tech.Pass) that cater to businesses that need to bring in global talent? (n=106)

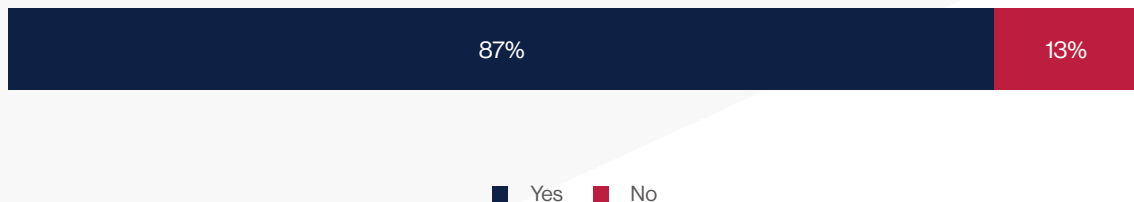


Figure 30. Usefulness of Overseas Networks and Expertise (ONE) Pass

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "The ONE Pass is useful to attract global top talent with the skills and expertise required to help my business grow."? (n=91)

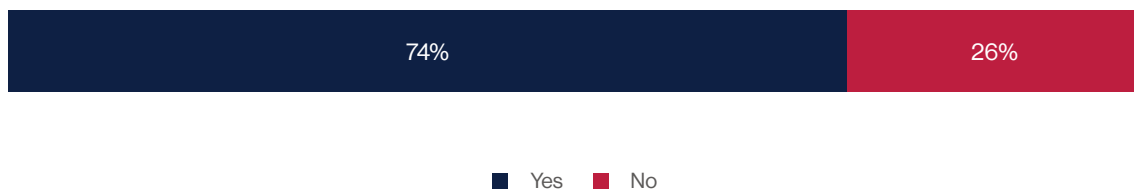


Figure 31. Usefulness of Personalised Employment Pass (PEP)

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "The Personalized Employment Pass (PEP) is useful to attract global top talent with the skills and expertise required to help my business grow."? (n=93)

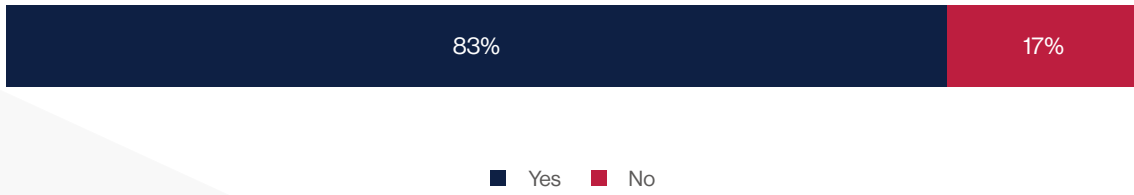
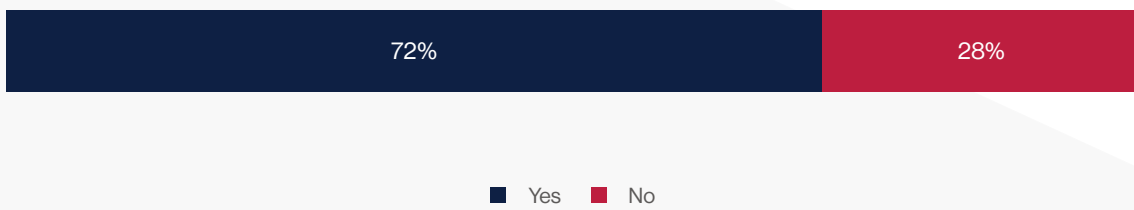


Figure 32. Usefulness of Tech.Pass

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "The Tech.Pass is useful to attract global top talent with the skills and expertise required to help my business grow."? (n=92)



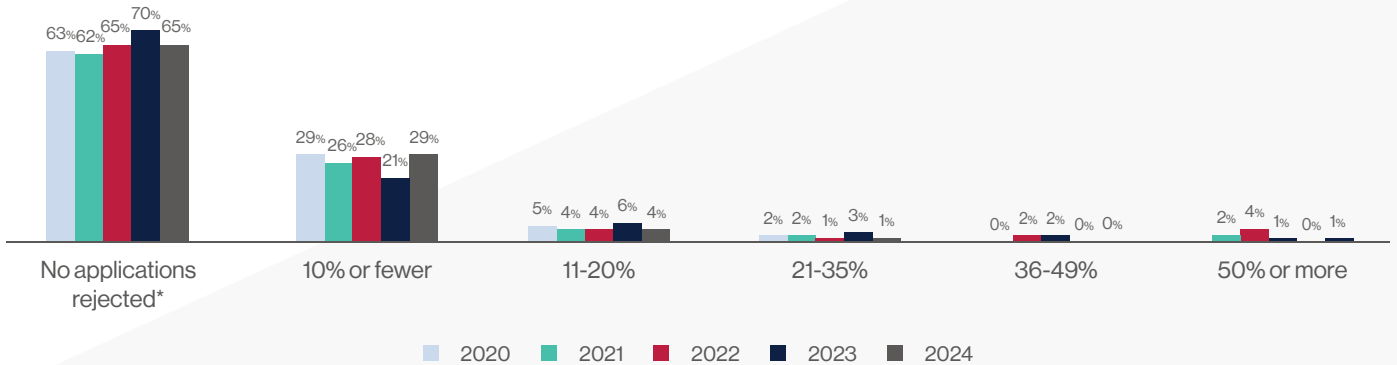
KEY FINDING 24

Work pass rejection rates have significantly reduced. Awareness of work pass application requirements and available resources remains consistent.

Companies submitting new EP applications experienced significantly lower rates of rejections.

Figure 33. Percentage of submitted work pass applications rejected

Q: What percentage of your submitted work pass applications have been rejected? (n=104)
*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



*For 2020 - 2023, percentages in this category include companies who did not submit work pass applications that year AND had no applications rejected.

Figure 34. Classifications of work pass applications rejected

Q: Which classifications of work pass applications were rejected in 2024? Select all that apply. (n=36)

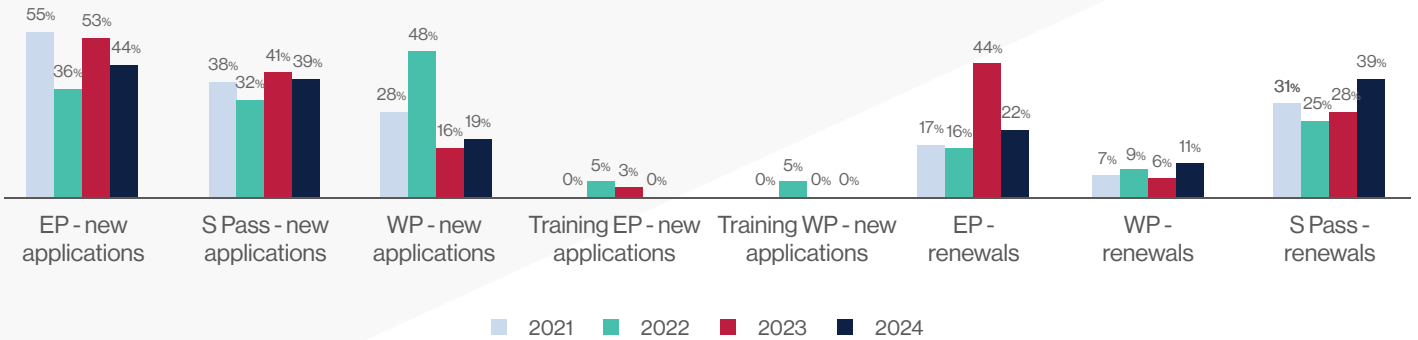


Figure 35. Reasons given for work pass rejections

Q: What was the reason given for the rejection of applied work passes? Select all that apply. (n=36)

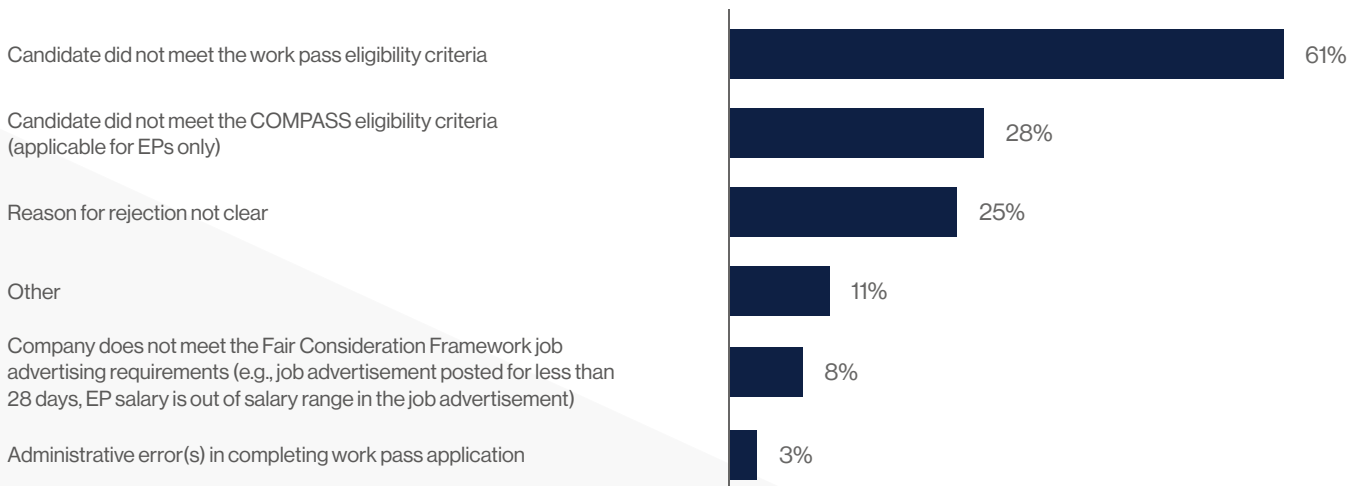


Figure 36. Use of MOM resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying

Q: Has your company used any of MOM's resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying in 2024? (n=101)

*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

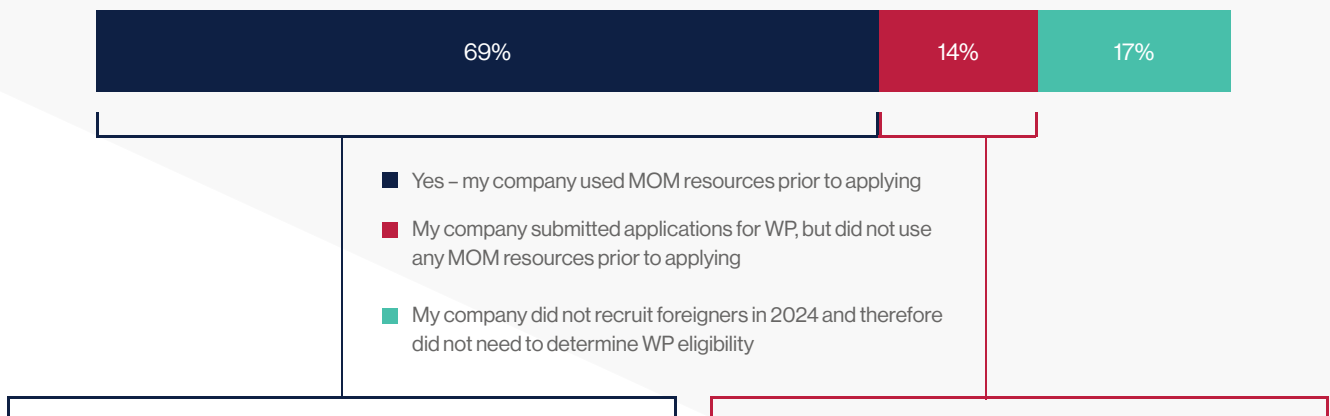


Figure 37. MOM resources used in 2024

Q: Which MOM resources did your company use in 2024? Select all that apply. (n=70)

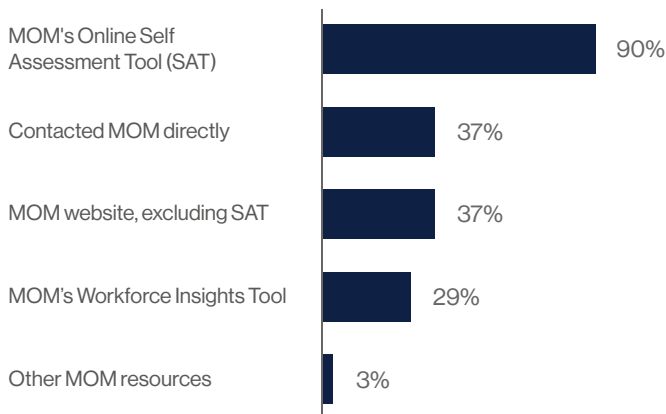
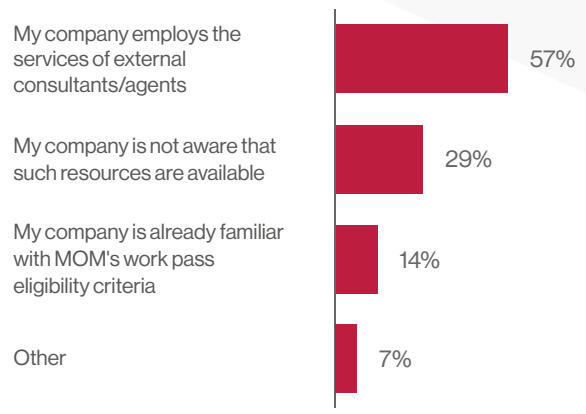


Figure 38. Reasons for not using MOM resources

Q: What is the main reason your company did not use any MOM resources prior to applying? Select all that apply. (n=14)



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PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Sourced from AmChamSG membership, 116 senior executives completed the 2025 Manpower Survey. Both MNCs and SMEs are represented in the survey, with most respondents from the services sector. The survey was open for responses from September 8 – September 30, 2025.

Company Size¹

MNCs: 76%

SMEs: 14%

Primary Sectors

Services: 64%

Manufacturing: 27%

Other: 9%

Profile of HR Teams in Respondent Companies:

How many employees are on your HR team?

None	13%
1-5 employees	40%
6-10 employees	9%
11-20 employees	12%
More than 20 employees	27%

What is the geographical mandate of your HR team in Singapore?

Select the largest scope applicable.

Singapore only	13%
Southeast Asia (including Singapore)	20%
Asia-Pacific (including Singapore)	36%
Global	16%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	15%

¹ The Singapore Government defines SMEs by the following criteria: Company group annual sales turnover not more than S\$100 million OR global employment size not more than 200 workers.

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