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## **THE TRUE PURPOSE OF WORK REVEALED: 97% OF SINGAPOREANS WANT MEANING AT WORK**

**Singapore (25 April 2024)** – 97% of Singaporeans say that meaning at work is important to them, and more than half of them (51%) are planning to take action to achieve it. Released today by job platform Jobs\_that\_makesense Asia, and global recruitment agency Manpower, the study polled largely working adults as well as a smaller group of tertiary students (33%) 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 explores the responses of 2,023 participants from six key Southeast Asian countries and aims to define what meaningful work means to today’s workforce. 494 in Singapore participated in this survey.

When looking for a new job, nearly half of the Singapore respondents (48%) have identified salary and job stability as their top priorities. And one in three respondents said that maintaining a positive work-life balance is becoming increasingly important for professional fulfillment. Significantly, the pursuit of a high salary is not driven by the quest for material wealth but rather by the aim to provide comfort and security for one’s family.

Unfortunately, the report shows that only one in five (20%) Singapore respondents is “very satisfied” with the level of purpose in their current role, demonstrating a significant opportunity for organizations who want to set themselves apart in the tight talent market.

### **SINGAPORE FINDINGS:**

- 97% of Singapore respondents indicated that having meaning at work was important to them. However, only one in five (20%) of Singapore respondents indicated they currently feel “very satisfied” with their current level of meaning at work.
- More than eight out of ten Singapore respondents agreed that enhancing working conditions with flexible hours, comprehensive health insurance and equal pay (82%),



advocacy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and other social causes (65%), and creating more opportunities dedicated to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) (56%) are actions organizations could implement to enhance their meaning at work.

- Limited availability of green and social-driven job opportunities (33%), the need to balance personal life responsibilities with professional aspirations (20%), and lack of skills and experience (15%) are the top three challenges Singapore respondents face in their quest for jobs with purpose.
- Seven in ten (73%) Singapore respondents indicated that they take into consideration the company's reputation for social responsibility when deciding to work for them.

### **SOUTHEAST ASIA 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 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 DEI and other social causes (72%) are actions organizations could implement to enhance their meaning at work.

**Jobs\_that\_makesense Asia CEO, Ms Léa Klein** said, over the past three years, we've 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 to 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 Manpower 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 Singapore, Ms Linda Teo**, said that the report’s insights will help employers in Singapore come up with better strategies to realign their business objectives to individual aspirations, setting the stage for a more inclusive and sustainable business model.

“Whenever the topic of meaning at work is discussed, Gen Z usually comes to mind. However, the report shows that it’s not just Gen Z who wants to work in jobs that combine passion with purpose, but workers across different age groups.”

Ms Teo added, “Notably, the report reveals that majority of Singapore believe that having more flexibility in their work improves their working conditions, giving them greater job fulfillment. Employers who have been slow to roll out flexible work arrangements should take note or risk falling behind in the race for talent.”

“Interestingly, the meaning of purpose at work is multifaceted. For many of the respondents, the fulfillment and personal stability the job provides is one part of the equation. While the pay and



working conditions matter, they also want their jobs to make a difference to society and the environment. Companies that seek to hire and attract the best talents need to start looking at how they can address these demands and create jobs where people feel engaged and fulfilled,” said Ms Teo.

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To view complete results for the Jobs\_that\_makesense Asia – Manpower’s The Quest for Meaning at Work Survey, visit: [www.manpower.com.sg/purpose\\_at\\_work\\_southeast\\_asia\\_report](http://www.manpower.com.sg/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](http://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](http://www.jobsthatmakesense.asia)

### **ABOUT MANPOWER**

[Manpower](http://www.manpower.com.sg)®, part of the [ManpowerGroup](http://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.sg](http://www.manpower.com.sg)

### **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](http://www.manpowergroup.com)