



2025 job market outlook & salary guide.

malaysia.



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business & talent outlook.

Malaysia is poised for continued strong growth in 2025, driven primarily by its digital economy, manufacturing and construction sectors.

In tandem with this growth, the increasing pace of digitalisation and globalisation has heightened the demand for talent with specialised skills. As companies expand their operations and investments within Malaysia, there is a pressing need for skilled professionals adept in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, data science, and digital infrastructure.

In a dipstick survey conducted with employers in Malaysia, 59% of respondents said that they have plans to increase their headcount in 2025.

industry and talent growth

The digital landscape in Malaysia has been bolstered by foreign direct investments (FDI) and a strong local demand for digital products and services. Projections indicate that the digital economy could contribute more than 25% of GDP by 2025, with e-commerce alone expected to reach a gross merchandise value of US\$25 billion by 2030.

Sectors such as e-commerce, digital services and infrastructure have experienced significant direct growth. We are also seeing more companies across several sectors exploring the benefits of artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) to find new ways of working and drive greater efficiencies.

By extension, more digital integrations are also seen in other sectors like legal, human resources, shared services, marketing as well as accounting and finance to improve accuracy and increase efficiency.

Malaysia's manufacturing sector remains a cornerstone of its economy, [contributing approximately 23% to its GDP in 2022](#). Confident in how digital technology can improve the manufacturing industries, companies continue to invest in Malaysia, which already has a strong reputation for producing electronics and automotive components.

On track with the nation's 4IR policy, Malaysia is shifting towards high-tech manufacturing, focussing on sectors like electronics, aerospace and medical devices.

Despite the high capital costs, manufacturers are among the first adopters of robotics and automation as they have proven to increase outputs, improve quality, and reduce costs in the long run. With more use cases expected in the coming years, demand for talent with digital and data skills will surge.

There will be a noticeable shift towards high-skill jobs, particularly in sectors such as AI, data analytics and digital services. As businesses increasingly adopt advanced technologies, the demand for skilled workers will outpace supply, prompting talent to upskill for more opportunities and better security.

In our survey, 41% of employers indicated that they anticipate the highest level of hiring activity to happen in technology next year. This is followed by 36% of respondents who expect to see significant growth in hiring within the sales and business development fields.

While the technology and manufacturing industries offer a more direct growth outlook, the prospects for the energy sector are more complex as the transition from traditional energy sources poses challenges for government, companies, and talent.

Malaysia aims to [increase its renewable energy share](#) to 20% by 2025 and 31% by 2035. However, achieving these targets requires substantial investments in alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and hydropower. The initial costs associated with grid infrastructure integration, storage solutions and land acquisition remain significant barriers for companies looking to pivot towards renewable energy.

The government is supporting this transition through several initiatives like the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) scheme and Renewable Energy Technology Park to encourage more investments in renewable energy and to foster innovation in sustainable practices.



59%

of employers have plans to increase their headcount in 2025.

impact of automation and digitalisation

Automation and digital transformation will significantly reshape job roles across almost all sectors in Malaysia.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute, automation might displace up to 25% of hours worked (equivalent to 4.5 million jobs) by 2030. Still, new labour demand driven by rising consumer incomes, education spending, and an ageing population could generate about 3.3 million new jobs.

In our 2024 Employer Brand Research, 45% of respondents in Malaysia said that AI has already impacted their jobs at some levels. Of these respondents, only 6% feel negatively about the impact of AI on job satisfaction.

However, our research also found that 34% of Malaysians have never used AI at work. Without early exposure to AI, the current workforce may not be adequately equipped or confident enough to meet different expectations in the future. A report by MDEC indicated that 70% of new job openings in 2024 will require digital skills, yet only 30% of the current workforce is equipped with these competencies.

Our survey reveals that 56% of employers are grappling with a shortage of talent possessing the necessary skills for their organisations. In response to this challenge, 52% of these employers plan to increase their hiring budgets specifically for technical skills and roles.

As much as they invest in the companies' growth, employers are encouraged to invest in retraining and upskilling employees to prepare them for the evolving job landscape. To navigate this transition effectively, key areas for skill development include proficiency in data analysis, programming, and machine learning, as well as soft skills like adaptability and emotional intelligence.

wage growth and support measures

Malaysia has traditionally been viewed as a low-cost market in Southeast Asia, but this perception is shifting as the country undergoes significant innovation and transformation post-pandemic. More companies are now prioritising the recruitment of quality talent with specialised skills.

In response to these economic changes and evolving job requirements, salaries are expected to rise across various sectors, with some industries experiencing particularly substantial increases.

According to our 2024 Employer Brand Research, salary and benefits remain the most important employee value proposition that Malaysians seek in an ideal employer.

In light of talent scarcity, 33% of employers plan to increase wages by 3% to 5% next year, while 28% are offering even more attractive salary raises of 5% to 10%.

Additionally, our survey indicates that approximately one in three employees in Malaysia can anticipate receiving a bonus equivalent to 1 to 2 months of salary. These measures reflect a strategic effort by employers to attract and retain top talent in a dynamic job market.

In the chapters of our market outlook and salary guide this year, we will delve deeper into the factors driving change in Malaysia's key sectors, as well as skills demands that are fuelling talent competition. We hope that this year's report helps you plan your HR strategies, from talent acquisition to employer branding.



fahad naeem
country director
randstad malaysia

56%

are unable to hire talent with the right technical skills

45%

AI has already impacted their jobs at some levels

52%

are increasing hiring budgets for technical skills

48%

malaysians quit their job to seek better work-life balance

59%

plan to increase headcount in 2025

33%

are expected to offer 3% to 5% salary increment in 2025

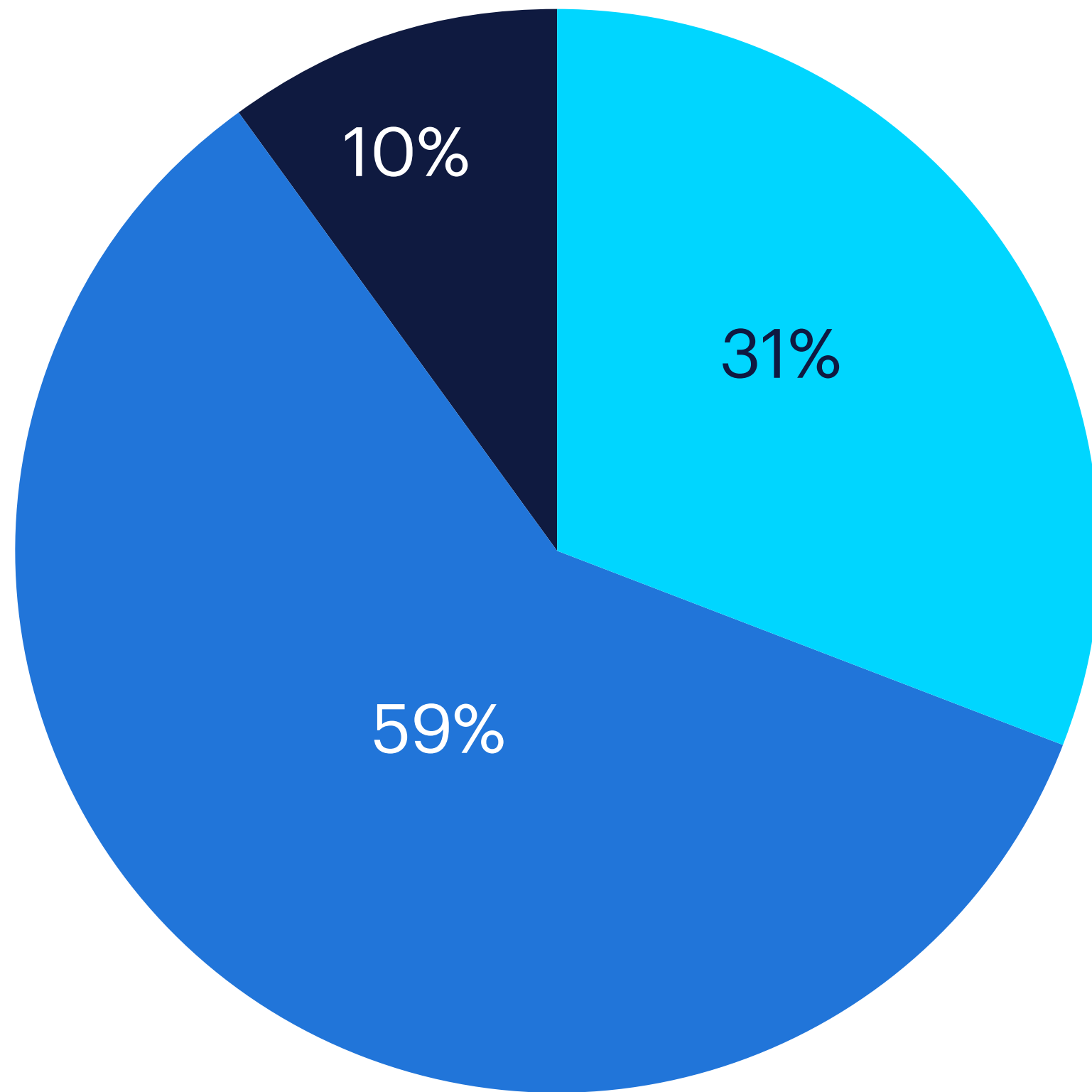
source: randstad malaysia 2024 employer brand research;
randstad malaysia 2025 talent outlook survey

malaysia 2025 talent outlook dipstick survey results.



partner for talent.

what are your projected hiring needs for 2025, will you be increasing, decreasing or maintaining your current headcount?



- increase in headcount (expanding teams, setting up new offices)
- no change to headcount
- decrease in headcount (restructuring, downsizing)



which job functions or departments will see the most hiring activity in 2025?



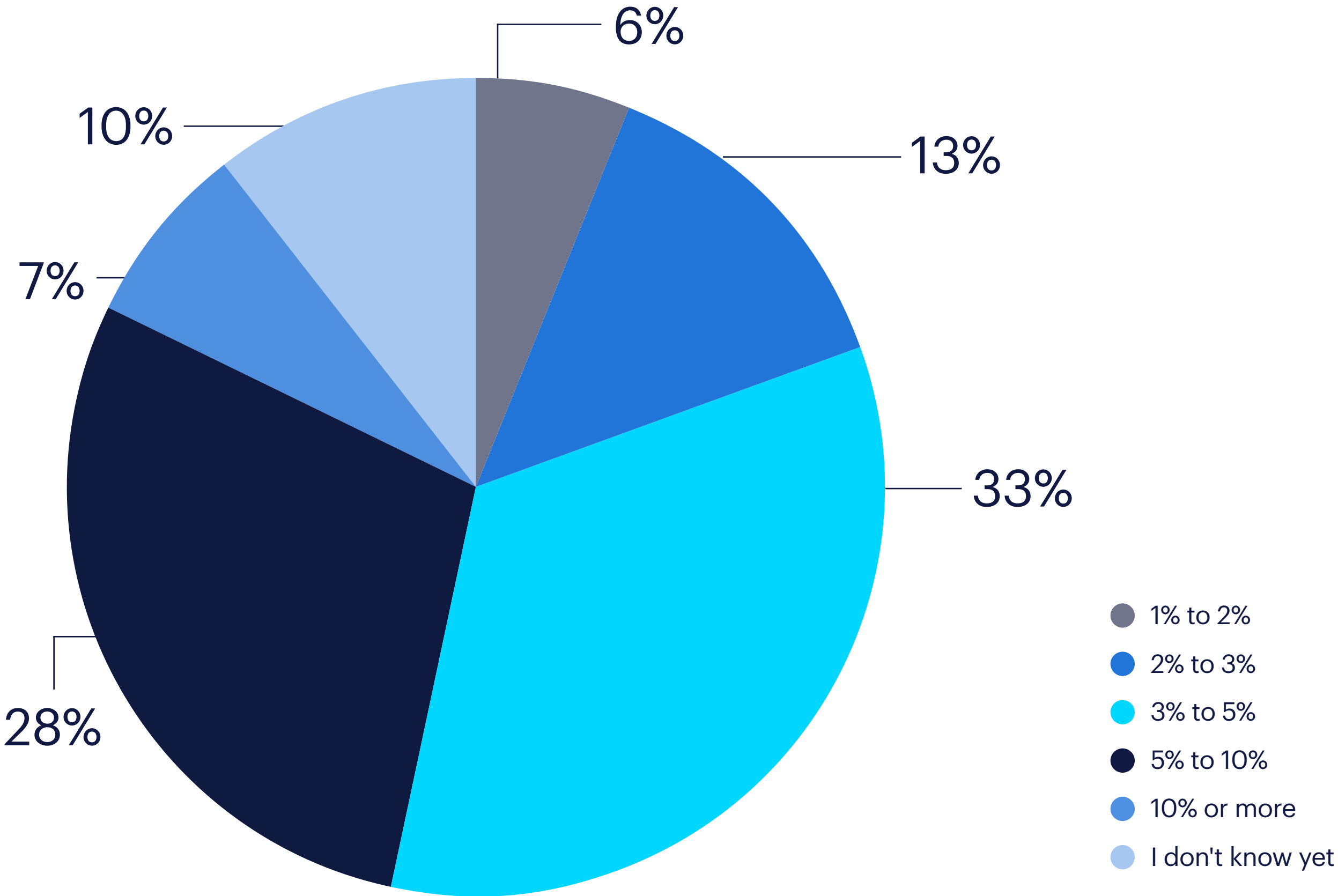
what will your hiring strategy for 2025 likely be?



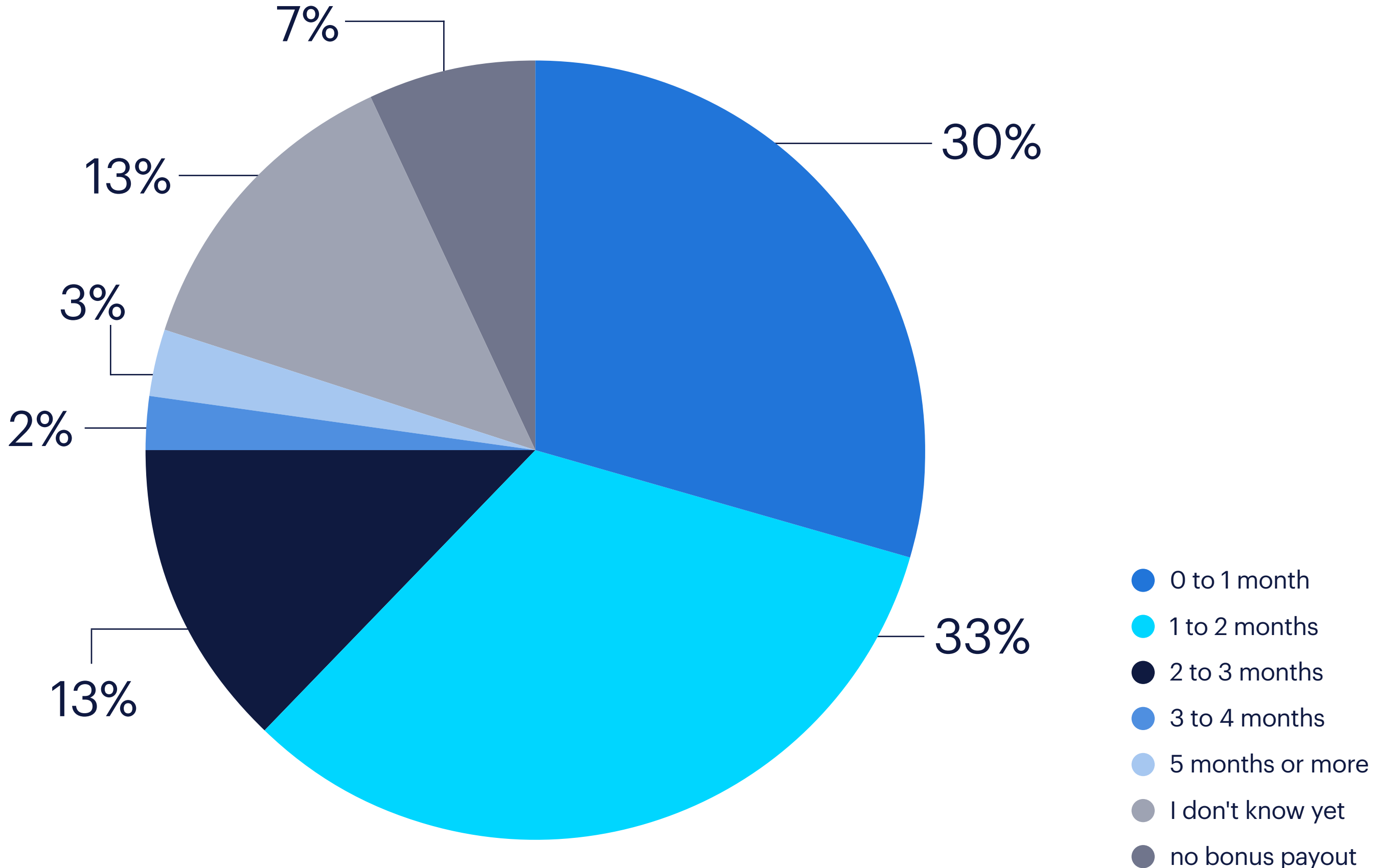
what will be your organisation's talent acquisition challenge in 2025?



what is your projected budget for average salary increases across your organisation in 2025?



will your company be issuing bonuses for work done in 2024, and how much on average across your organisation?



what are the biggest HR challenges you anticipate facing in 2025?



accounting and finance.

Accounting and finance roles are in demand as sectors from e-commerce to construction continue to grow. But requirements are also changing, with companies looking to digital transformation and automation to transform their operations, not to mention the increasing requirements of meeting international ESG and other standards.

That creates plenty of opportunities for talent with the right skills, as well as competition between hiring managers to recruit and retain them.

growth in e-commerce

E-commerce continues to grow in Malaysia, with [predictions](#) that the sector could hit RM1.65 trillion in 2025. The government has provided strong support, including the #SayaDigital campaign which has helped 500,000 small businesses get started with e-commerce and e-payment systems.

The growth of online-only retailers as well as the ongoing adoption of e-commerce by traditional brick and mortar stores has created strong demand for accounting and finance roles. While Malaysia has a large pool of accounting talent, companies generally prefer candidates with e-commerce experience, ideally in the same sector, since standards can vary and employers ideally want someone who can deliver results from day one.

That means that talent with experience in certain sectors, such as FMCG, can find themselves in high demand.

To attract candidates, companies are using higher compensation as a key strategy, but they are also focusing on career progression opportunities and offering hybrid working arrangements, which are important to candidates.

construction continues to build

Malaysia's budget for 2025 is packed with infrastructure projects, such as the Sarawak-Sabah Link Road Phase 2 and the Pan-Borneo Highway. The rise in popularity of data-hungry AI has fuelled already strong demand for data centre construction, with the likes of Microsoft, Google and Amazon all investing in the country. Strong government support for renewable energy means there is a wave of construction projects underway, particularly in solar.

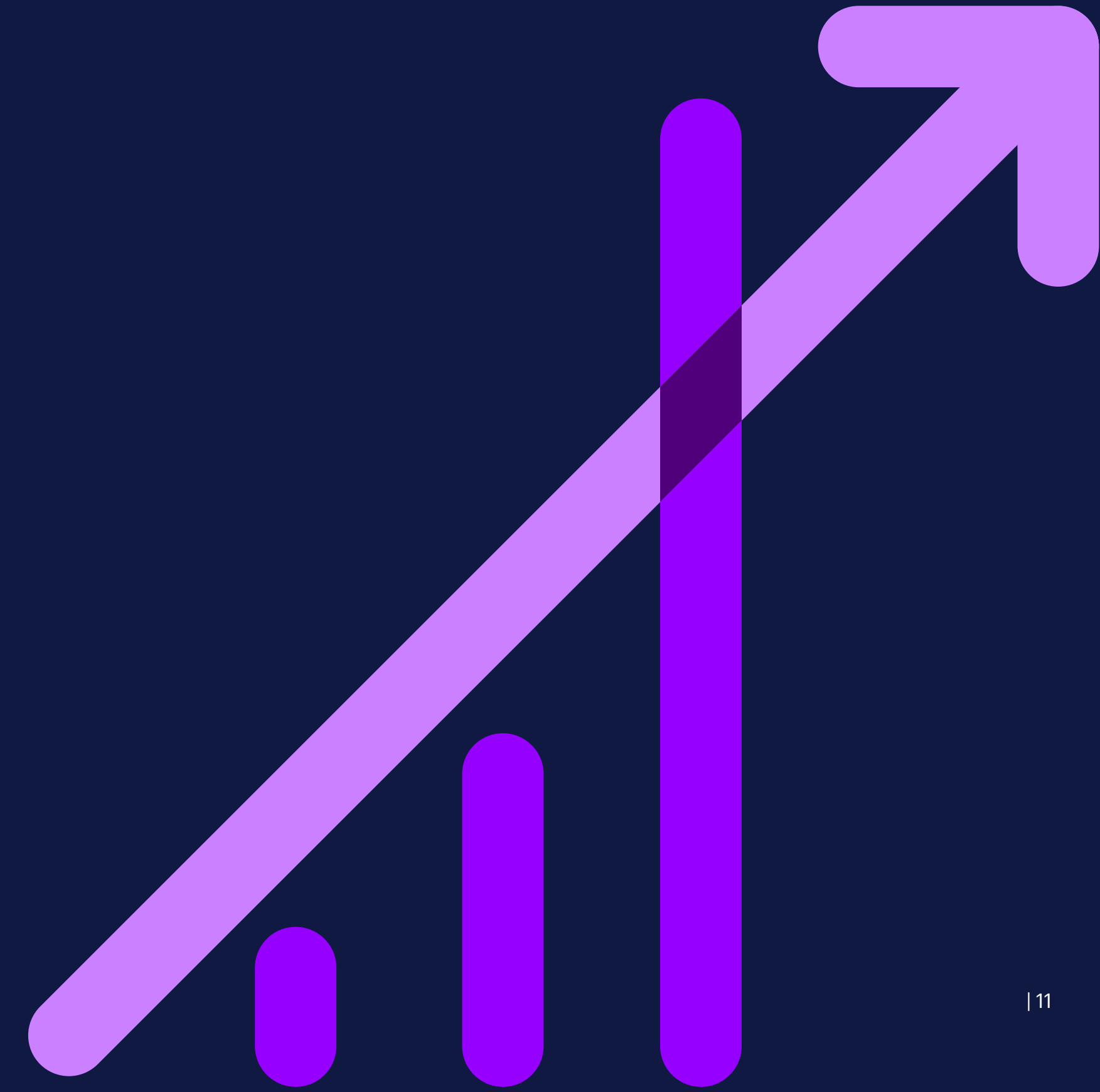
Even the residential property market is picking up, with developers expecting stronger growth in the first half of 2025 than in the second half of 2024.

While there are some concerns about rising costs, including a call from builders to delay the implementation of Malaysia's carbon tax, scheduled for 2026, on the whole, the sector looks poised for a strong 2025.

That creates demand for finance talent within property and construction, particularly for positions like finance managers and project accountants. Experience in property and construction finance is particularly valued, as companies seek candidates who understand the financial challenges and technical know-how unique to the industry, such as long project timelines and large capital outlays.

However, similar to other sectors, there is a shortage of candidates with specific industry experience. With hybrid working less prevalent due to the need to be on-site, companies instead need to compete on compensation and career development opportunities to attract and retain talent.

“high demand for finance talent in property and construction, particularly for finance managers and project accountants.”



demand for professional services

Malaysia has emerged as the clear winner from the China Plus One strategy, with Chinese investment making up more than half of FDI. Chinese language skills give Malaysia a major advantage over regional rivals like Indonesia, while favourable government policies have also helped attract investment.

But it's not just Chinese companies. Western companies like AMD, Bosch and Infineon have all [made significant investments](#), and US-China tensions have led to growth in Malaysia's semiconductor industry as companies and governments look to diversify their supply chains.

As well as benefitting the construction sector, this growth has been good news for Malaysia's professional services companies. Newcomers need help with company formation, and often prefer to outsource accounting, auditing and tax to local firms familiar with the market, leading to significant growth and new employment opportunities in the sector.

sustainable growth

Sustainability continues to gain importance across industries. It's particularly important for companies looking to export to western markets, but is increasingly being demanded by consumers closer to home. That's creating demand for accounting and finance professionals with experience in sustainability reporting, ESG compliance, and relatively new financial instruments such as sustainability-linked loans.

While employers generally prefer direct experience, the ability to partner with different departments to make vdata-driven decisions is key, so candidates with strong communication and data analysis skills are likely to enjoy an advantage here.

software skills

While we haven't quite seen the AI revolution that boosters of the technology have been predicting, it's certainly true that accounting and finance professionals need to sharpen their software skills.

On January 1 the government brought in the second phase of its e-invoicing rules, requiring taxpayers with annual turnover between RM25 million and RM100 million to provide electronic invoices through the government's MyInvois system. Smaller companies will be required to do the same from July.

At the same time, companies are increasingly looking at process automation and other digital solutions to optimise internal efficiency and improve accuracy.

That creates opportunities for accounting and finance candidates with experience in specific software. More generally, it raises expectations that all candidates should have a certain basic level of software skills and advanced Excel skills. The more tech-savvy the talent, the more opportunities there are likely to be.

talent trends in 2025

We expect these roles to be particularly in demand in 2025:

- Financial planning and analysis
- Group consolidation
- Financial reporting

Leadership skills are also increasingly being sought out by hiring managers, so candidates with experience in managing teams or even helping mentor others are particularly in demand.

We expect candidates changing employers to command in the range of 15% to 20% salary increases, though for those with specialist skills, it could go as high as 30%.



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director

accounting & finance | HR | legal | sales & marketing

in-demand roles.

- financial planning and analysis
- group consolidation
- financial reporting

accounting and finance.

accounting	years of experience	low	medium	high
account executive	1 - 2	3,000 - 4,000	4,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 6,000
senior account executive	2 - 3	4,500 - 5,500	5,500 - 6,000	6,000 - 7,000
junior accountant	3 - 5	5,500 - 6,500	6,500 - 7,500	7,500 - 8,000
accountant / assistant account manager	4 - 6	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000	8,000 - 9,000
accounts receivable manager	5 - 8	6,500 - 7,500	8,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 10,000
accounting manager	6 - 8	9,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 13,000	13,000 - 15,000
audit				
audit assistant	0 - 1	2,300 - 2,700	2,700 - 3,000	3,000 - 3,500
audit associate	1 - 2	3,000 - 3,500	3,500 - 4,000	4,000 - 4,300
audit senior	2 - 4	4,500 - 5,000	5,000 - 6,000	6,000 - 6,500
audit assistant manager	4 - 6	7,000 - 7,500	7,500 - 9,000	9,000 - 9,500
audit manager	6 - 10	8,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000	13,000 - 15,000
audit senior manager	10 - 15	10,000 - 12,000	11,000 - 14,000	12,000 - 17,000
audit director	15 - 20	22,000 - 25,000	25,000 - 28,000	28,000 - 30,000
credit control				
credit controller	3 - 6	5,000 - 6,000	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000
senior credit controller	6 - 10	8,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000	13,000 - 15,000
compliance				
compliance analyst	1 - 3	3,000 - 3,500	3,500 - 4,500	4,500 - 5,500
compliance senior analyst	3 - 5	3,500 - 4,500	4,500 - 6,000	6,000 - 8,000
compliance assistant manager	5 - 8	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 11,000
compliance manager	8 - 10	7,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 15,000
compliance senior manager	10 - 15	9,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 18,000
compliance head	15 - 20	11,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 18,000	18,000 - 25,000
compliance director	18 - 23	15,000 - 18,000	18,000 - 25,000	25,000 - 30,000
chief compliance officer	20 - 30	18,000 - 25,000	25,000 - 30,000	30,000 - 50,000
corporate finance				
corporate finance executive	1 - 3	3,000 - 4,000	4,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 6,000
corporate finance senior executive	3 - 5	4,500 - 5,500	5,500 - 7,000	6,000 - 7,500
corporate finance assistant manager	5 - 8	7,000 - 8,000	8,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 10,000
corporate finance manager	9 - 12	10,000 - 12,000	12,000 - 14,000	16,000 - 18,000
head of corporate finance	15 - 20	18,000 - 20,000	25,000 - 30,000	32,000 - 35,000

finance	years of experience	low	medium	high
finance executive	1 - 3	3,000 - 4,000	4,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 6,000
finance senior executive	3 - 5	5,000 - 6,000	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000
assistant finance manager	6 - 8	8,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 11,000
finance manager	7 - 9	10,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 13,000	13,000 - 15,000
senior finance manager	10 - 12	12,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 17,000	18,000 - 20,000
financial controller	12 - 15	18,000 - 20,000	20,000 - 22,000	22,000 - 25,000
finance director	15 - 20	25,000 - 30,000	30,000 - 40,000	40,000 - 45,000
chief financial officer	18 - 25	28,000 - 35,000	35,000 - 45,000	45,000 - 60,000
financial planning & analysis				
finance analyst	1 - 3	3,000 - 4,000	4,000 - 5,500	5,500 - 7,000
FP&A assistant manager	4 - 6	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000	8,000 - 10,000
FP&A manager	6 - 10	10,000 - 12,000	12,000 - 14,000	14,000 - 16,000
senior FP&A manager	10 - 12	14,000 - 16,000	16,000 - 18,000	18,000 - 20,000
FP&A director	13 - 20	20,000 - 24,000	25,000 - 30,000	30,000 - 35,000
internal audit				
internal audit executive	3 - 5	4,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000
senior internal auditor	5 - 7	6,000 - 7,000	7,500 - 8,500	9,000 - 10,000
internal audit manager	8 - 10	9,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000	17,000 - 18,000
head of internal audit	15 - 20	17,000 - 19,000	20,000 - 22,000	23,000 - 25,000
chief internal auditor	20 - 25	25,000 - 30,000	30,000 - 40,000	45,000 - 50,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

accounting and finance.

investment	years of experience	low	medium	high
investment executive	1 - 3	3,000 - 4,000	4,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 6,000
investment senior executive	3 - 5	4,500 - 5,500	5,500 - 7,000	6,000 - 7,500
investment assistant manager	5 - 8	7,000 - 8,000	8,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 12,000
investment manager	6 -12	10,000 - 12,000	12,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 20,000
investment senior manager	10 -15	12,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 18,000	18,000 - 25,000
investment director	15 -25	20,000 - 25,000	25,000 - 35,000	35,000 - 45,000
chief investment officer	20 - 30	30,000 - 40,000	40,000 - 55,000	55,000 - 70,000
investor relation				
investor relations manager	5 - 10	8,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000	12,000 - 15,000
head of investor relations	10 - 20	12,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 19,000	19,000 - 25,000
tax				
tax accountant	3 - 6	5,000 - 6,000	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000
tax manager	7 - 10	9,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 14,000	14,000 - 16,000
head of tax	15 - 20	20,000 - 22,000	25,000 - 30,000	32,000 - 35,000
treasury				
treasury executive	2 - 4	4,000 - 5,000	5,000 - 6,000	6,000 - 7,000
treasury senior executive	4 - 6	6,000 - 7,000	7,000 - 8,000	8,000 - 8,500
treasury manager	8 - 10	9,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 13,000	13,000 - 15,000
head of treasury	15 - 20	20,000 - 22,000	22,000 - 25,000	25,000 - 30,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

construction and property.

Demand for mid-range residential properties drove talent demand in Malaysia, while the growth in the construction industry is aligned with the country's development. The spectacular growth of data-hungry AI has fuelled major investment in data centres in Malaysia, with the country predicted to become the largest market in the region next year.

There's also significant ongoing investment in renewable energy, in particular solar, which is ideally suited to a country blessed with plenty of land and sunshine.

While these trends create many opportunities for talent, there is intense competition for skills that the existing talent pool that has built up in residential construction may not adequately supply.

data centres create skills shortage.

Demand for data centres in Malaysia is booming as these facilities migrate out of Singapore, with predictions that [Malaysia could become the largest market in Southeast Asia by 2026](#).

Although it remained the leader in 2024, Singapore's constraints, such as limited land and strict energy regulations aimed at reducing carbon emissions, have pushed some data centre operators to relocate.

Malaysia, on the other hand, has positioned itself as an attractive alternative for foreign investment in data centres, offering available land, access to renewable energy, and favourable government policies such as the Green Lane Pathway initiative which streamlines power approvals, reducing lead times to as little as 12 months.

Data centres in Malaysia are largely concentrated in two areas, the Cyberjaya technology park near Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Bahru, which benefits from more land for the largest data centres as well as proximity to Singapore, home to the regional offices of many of the companies making these investments. In 2024 Equinix opened its first two data centres in Malaysia, with AirTrunk also opening a hyperscale data centre in Johor Bahru.

While the Malaysian data centre market has been growing for the past couple of years, it was turbocharged by the increase in demand for AI and cloud computing, which require enormous volumes of data processing.

Microsoft for example has committed more than US\$2 billion to AI and cloud computing services in Malaysia, including the construction of a new data centre in Johor.

We're also seeing new tech companies moving to the region, such as ChatGPT-maker OpenAI opening an office in Singapore, which may further increase demand for data centres in countries such as Malaysia.

The residential sector in Malaysia has shifted focus towards affordable housing and mid-range projects in recent years, resulting in a significant pool of architects and civil and structural engineers to support a booming residential market and initiatives like Malaysia My Second Home.

However, data centres require significantly different skill sets, with most of the work focusing on mechanical and electrical engineering. That has resulted in a major skills shortage in Malaysia, exacerbated by tight timelines of 12 months or less that are inflexible for on-the-job training, meaning most recruiters are looking for candidates who have experience working on data centre projects.

Companies are increasingly looking to foreign talent to address the skills gap for more sophisticated projects. This strategy not only aims to fill immediate needs but also facilitates the transfer of skills, enhancing the capabilities of the local workforce. Additionally, companies are considering candidates with experience in similar construction projects, such as semiconductor plants.

Talent competition seems set to continue over the next few years as more property developers collaborate with companies to move into the data centre market. For example, Sime Darby Property is building a data centre near Kuala Lumpur in partnership with Google, a new direction for a developer that has previously largely focused on residential, commercial and industrial properties.

“data centres
are hiring candidates with construction
experiences address talent scarcity.”

solar energy a bright spot

Demand for renewable energy continues to increase in Malaysia, driven by consumer demand as well as government incentives.

Solar has emerged as the dominant renewable power source in the country, given plentiful land and year-round sunshine. At the end of 2024, the government was finalising Phase Five of its Large Scale Solar programme, which will fund projects to generate a total of 2,000MW of solar capacity by 2026.

This creates increasing demand for talent with experience working on solar construction projects, who are in relatively short supply in the market. Employers are generally reluctant to hire from other industries as they require talent with the technical know-how to carry out these projects, making competition even more intense. We're seeing companies try to offer stability, such as contracts that run across multiple projects for a longer period, in order to stand out from other employers.

As solar projects come online there is also growing demand for staff who can operate and maintain them, which is a relatively small but increasingly important sector.

malaysians in demand overseas

Malaysians with specialist skills are increasingly finding opportunities abroad. Other Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam are also aiming to develop their data centre and renewable energy industries and, much like Malaysia, they face similar shortages of skilled workers.

Many Malaysians are trilingual so talent can make the move fairly easily. We've even seen Chinese-speaking Malaysians move as far afield as Taiwan. The trend remains small, but it's one to watch, especially when local companies are already faced with talent scarcity.

talent trends in 2025

We expect these roles to be particularly in demand in 2025 to make progress in Malaysia's property and construction market:

- Design managers
- Project directors
- Project engineers
- Planning managers

Talent who are switching employers in 2025 can generally expect an increment in the range of 15% to 20%. Those without specialist skills in growth areas such as data centres might expect somewhere in the range of 10% to 15%, whereas talent with particularly niche skills may be able to command 30% or more.



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in-demand roles.

- design managers
- project directors
- project engineers
- planning managers

construction and property.

engineering	years of experience	low	medium	high
structural engineer	3 - 7	4,000	5,000	8,000
civil engineer	3 - 7	4,000	5,000	8,000
geotechnical engineer	3 - 7	4,000	5,000	8,000
mechanical engineer	3 - 7	4,000	5,000	8,000
resident engineer	8 - 10	7,000	9,000	13,000
associate	> 8	9,000	11,000	13,000
technical director	> 10	13,000	15,000	20,000
architecture				
project architect	3 - 7	4,000	5,000	8,000
design architect	3 - 7	4,000	5,000	8,000
resident architect	8 - 10	7,000	9,000	13,000
building information technology (BIM)				
BIM modeller	3 - 7	3,500	5,000	6,000
BIM coordinator	3 - 7	4,000	6,000	8,000
BIM manager	> 10	7,000	10,000	13,000
property development				
project manager	> 8	8,000	12,000	16,000
design manager	> 8	8,000	12,000	16,000
contract manager	> 8	8,000	12,000	16,000
general manager	> 15	20,000	30,000	40,000
business development manager	8 - 10	8,000	10,000	12,000
sales & marketing manager	8 - 10	8,000	10,000	12,000
assistant project manager	6 - 8	6,000	7,000	8,000

construction	years of experience	low	medium	high
general manager	> 20	23,000	29,000	35,000
project director	> 20	18,000	21,500	25,000
senior project manager	> 20	15,000	18,500	22,000
project manager	> 10	12,000	15,000	18,000
assistant project manager	8 - 10	7,000	9,500	12,000
senior project engineer	3 - 7	5,000	7,000	9,000
project engineer	0 - 3	3,000	4,500	6,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

human resources and business support.

The Human Resources and Business Support sector in Malaysia is projected to remain active in 2025, driven by the influx of companies establishing and expanding their operations.

growing demand for talent

As organisations expand their Shared Services in Malaysia, the demand for Human Resources and Business Support talent has increased significantly. Companies are not only creating new digital roles for HR analytics to support Shared Services companies but are also expanding their Shared Services to provide Payroll and Administration to their clients.

Additionally, companies from the region in the renewable energy sector are setting up operations and back office functions in Malaysia, which has further driven the demand for skilled HR and Business Support professionals.

Several global financial institutions have restructured their operations by relocating certain roles to Malaysia, and adding new positions to support offshore markets, as they seek to optimise costs while leveraging Malaysia's competitive advantages. This trend is also evident in other sectors, including professional services, FMCG, and manufacturing.

As a multilingual talent hub, the country is seeing a rise in demand for talent who are business proficient in both English and Mandarin. This is particularly important for supporting clients in mainland China and Hong Kong, in addition to other Southeast Asian markets.

new roles, enhanced skills and a focus on commercial acumen

Employers are increasingly offering specialised roles within the Human Resources function, a trend expected to continue into 2025 as the industry becomes more focused and specialised.

Companies are dedicated to upskilling their workforce to adapt to ongoing transformation and automation. Alongside leadership training, organisations are becoming more adept at identifying top performers for succession planning.

As a result, new job opportunities are arising in areas such as Organisational Design, Talent Management, and Learning and Development. There is a growing preference for certified professionals capable of replicating past successes.

However, some roles, such as Diversity and Inclusion Officers, are sunseting as their responsibilities merge with Employee Relations and Employer Branding.

Employers are now prioritising candidates with strong commercial acumen and financial knowledge, particularly for senior positions that require strategic development and data analysis to ensure good outcomes.

In addition to technical skills, employers seek HR professionals with excellent communication abilities and stakeholder management skills. These professionals are expected to act as brand ambassadors, communicating a clear understanding of the employer's brand messages and working closely with senior management and employees to enhance the overall employee experience.



hiring for industry experience, cultural fit and innovation

When hiring, employers place significant emphasis on cultural fit. HR professionals must not only integrate well within their teams but also collaborate effectively with employees to solve problems and improve their overall experience for a positive working environment.

We are also seeing more companies hire HR professionals in talent acquisition that are innovative and creative in their approach. For example, traditionally conservative industries are leveraging platforms like TikTok to showcase their employer brand and employee experiences, appealing to a younger demographic.

Despite a rich candidate market in HR and Business Support, employers often prefer candidates from the same industry due to their foundational knowledge of specific requirements and processes. While talent is abundant, partnering with recruitment firms can streamline the hiring process as we conduct preliminary interviews to shortlist candidates or help headhunt specialised talent needed for organisational transformation.



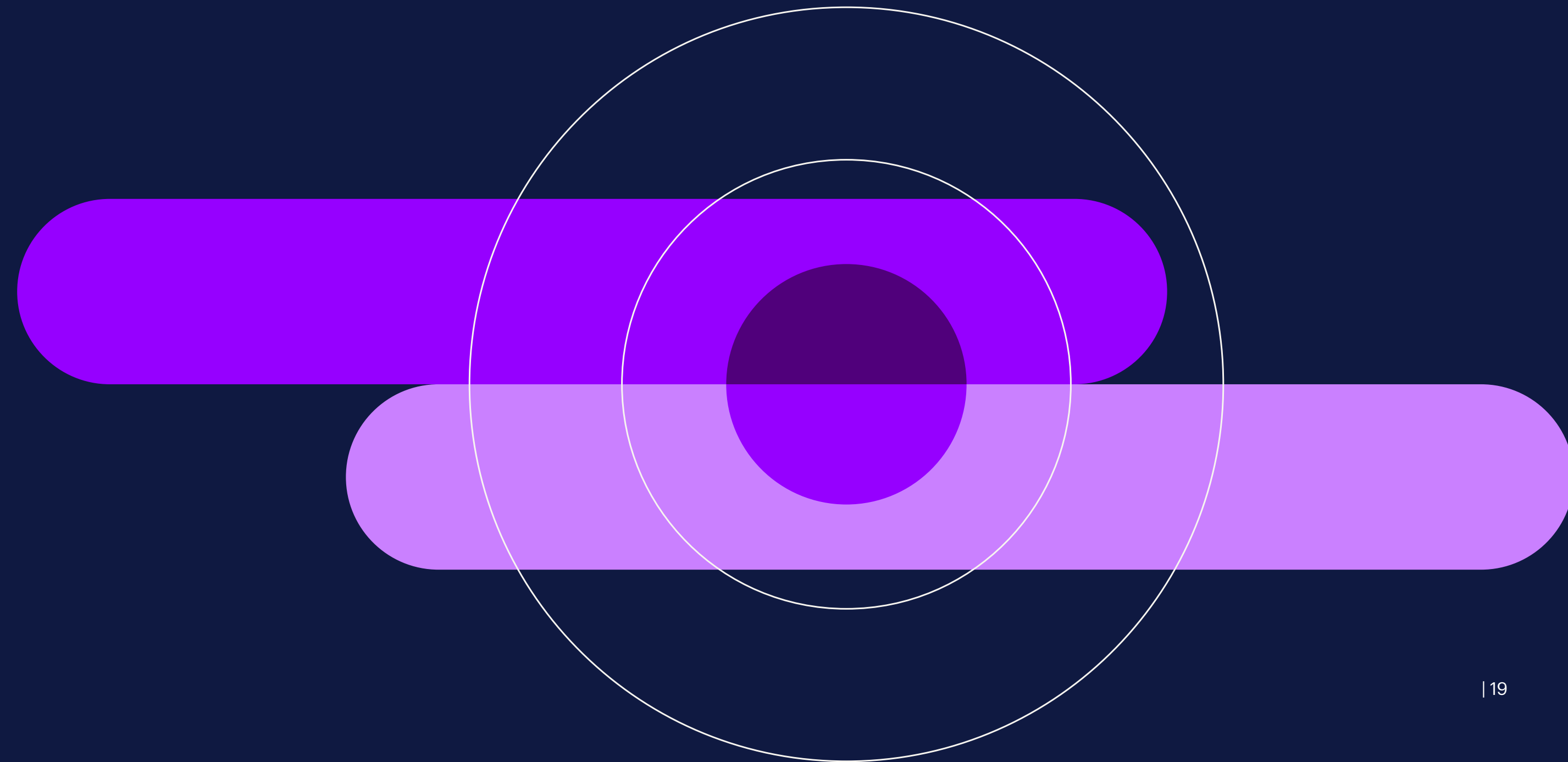
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in-demand skills.

- commercial acumen
- financial knowledge
- data analysis
- communications skills
- stakeholder management



human resources.

roles	years of experience	low	medium	high
HR executive	1 - 3	3,500	4,500	5,500
senior HR executive	3 - 5	4,500	6,000	7,000
assistant HR manager	5 - 7	7,000	8,500	10,000
HR manager / HRBP	8 - 10	10,000	12,000	15,000
senior HR manager / senior HRBP	12 - 15	15,000	20,000	25,000
GM HR / head of HR	15 - 20	25,000	35,000	40,000
HR director / CHRO	> 20	35,000	40,000	50,000
regional HR manager/ HRBP	10 - 15	20,000	25,000	30,000
regional HR director	> 20	35,000	40,000	50,000
TA executive / recruiter	1 - 3	5,000	6,000	7,000
senior TA executive / TA specialist	3 - 5	7,000	8,000	9,000
TA partner / assistant TA manager	5 - 7	8,000	9,000	10,000
TA manager	8 - 12	10,000	12,000	15,000
regional TA manager	8 - 12	12,000	15,000	18,000
senior TA manager	12 - 15	15,000	18,000	20,000
regional senior TA manager	12 - 15	18,000	20,000	25,000
TA director	> 15	20,000	25,000	30,000
payroll executive	1 - 3	4,500	6,000	7,000
senior payroll executive / payroll specialist	3 - 6	7,000	8,000	9,000
payroll manager	7 - 10	10,000	12,000	15,000
senior payroll manager	10 - 15	15,000	18,000	20,000
payroll director	> 15	20,000	25,000	30,000
L&D executive	1 - 3	4,500	6,000	7,000
L&D specialist / senior L&D executive	3 - 5	7,000	8,000	9,000
assistant L&D manager	5 - 7	9,000	10,000	11,000
L&D manager	7 - 10	12,000	15,000	18,000

roles	years of experience	low	medium	high
talent management specialist	3 - 5	7,000	9,000	12,000
talent management & OD manager	8 - 10	15,000	20,000	25,000
head of talent management & OD	> 15	20,000	25,000	30,000
C&B specialist / rewards specialist	3 - 5	7,000	10,000	12,000
C&B manager / rewards manager	8 - 10	12,000	15,000	18,000
regional C&B manager / rewards	10 - 15	15,000	18,000	25,000
C&B director / rewards	> 15	25,000	30,000	35,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

legal.

Hiring activities for legal professionals in Malaysia have notably increased and diversified. As companies expand their operations in Malaysia or have restructured certain legal and governance functions from traditional regional hubs like Singapore and Hong Kong to be based in Malaysia, driving the demand for local legal and corporate secretarial talent.

“Heavy industries” like the energy, manufacturing and construction sectors are active in expansion, requiring legal professionals with more industry-specific technical expertise and experience. The growth in renewable energy, data centres and semiconductor sectors in Malaysia has further fueled this demand.

Data Centres: Partnerships between construction and property conglomerates and large tech and telco firms to establish data centres in Malaysia have created a need for lawyers experienced in engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contracts, data and software-related contracts, particularly in Cloud Services and SaaS.

Renewable Energy: The [Malaysian Investment Development Authority \(MIDA\)](#) approved green investments worth RM54.7 billion to date in December 2023, with the majority in renewable energy. Implementation of the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR) is expected to lift gross domestic product value from RM25 billion in 2023 to RM220 billion and generate 310,000 jobs by 2050. Apart from domestic investments, this growth is also supported by foreign firms from Singapore and China, necessitating legal expertise in compliance and regulatory matters.

Multinational companies and local firms from the semiconductor, renewable energy, property, construction and data centres industries are expanding into new markets and putting in plans to pursue partnerships and IPOs, which heightens the need for lawyers familiar with cross-market corporate exercises and regulations, joint ventures, mergers & acquisitions (M&As), IPO and corporate governance requirements in incorporation stages.

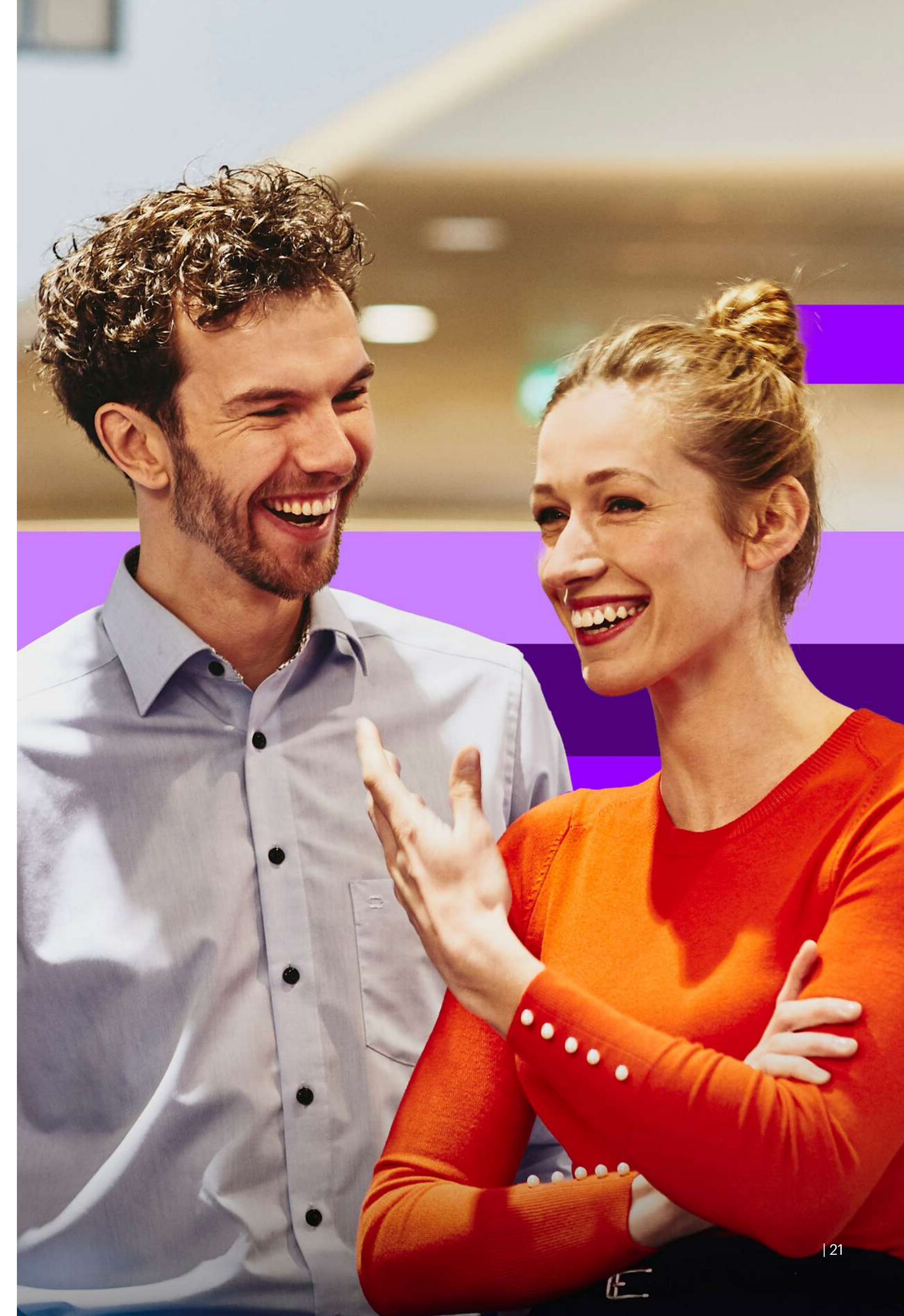
While there is a strong demand for these highly specialised and experienced talent, securing the positions can be challenging due to high employer requirements for technical skills and increasing demand for Mandarin language proficiency. At the same time, talent wants to work with companies that can continue offering similar opportunities in the long term so that they can have the opportunity to deepen their capabilities.

Employers also have high expectations for candidates, seeking specialised skills to meet specific role requirements. For instance, data centres prefer lawyers with construction experience and semiconductor companies seek specialists with tender and legal procurement backgrounds.

The Shared Services sector is also booming, with an expected continued growth through 2025. Regional legal roles are evolving to require advanced skills in various commercial legal areas, like technology contracts, general commercial contracts (sales, marketing, goods and services), procurement legal contracts, and compliance with data protection laws like PDPA and GDPR.

In the Financial Services Sector, the launch of two digital banks this year will prompt more to introduce their digital banking services and offer a wider variety of financial products in 2025. It is also apparent that institutional banks and new financial services players are creating more roles in private trust, premier banking and securities, seeking legal professionals familiar with Securities Commission guidelines, capital markets requirements and governance related to investment matters, especially for the high-net-worth individuals market.

Legal talent with prior experience in the trustee sector, private wealth management, estate planning, and investments would have a distinct advantage due to the direct technical fit.



corporate secretarial taking up more responsibilities

The corporate secretarial talent market in Malaysia is scarce, as talent demand surpasses labour supply. It is common for good talent to receive multiple job offers and employers can often take up to 9 months to secure suitable talent, further highlighting a significant scarcity in this field.

Employers now expect corporate secretaries to take on governance advisory roles rather than merely administrative functions.

The responsibilities previously held by heads of legal or external corporate secretaries are now handed over to in-house corporate secretaries, as an in-house point of contact to align on regulatory needs helps streamline communications and enhance efficiency.

This transition offers growth opportunities for corporate secretaries, allowing them to develop skills in communication and stakeholder management.

Companies want corporate secretaries to play a more advisory role to their senior stakeholders, and their responsibilities now include:

- Advising the board of directors on governance and compliance with regulatory requirements from the Securities Commission, Bursa Malaysia and Central Bank of Malaysia
- Managing conflicts of interest at committee and board levels

This shift has increased demand for certified corporate secretaries with governance and corporate exercise exposure, particularly those accredited by The Chartered Governance Institute and Malaysian Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (MAICSA), who can effectively navigate governance issues.

evolving legal talent landscape in private practice and in-house

Private practices in Malaysia continue to prioritise candidates with strong educational backgrounds and experience from reputable firms, emphasising the importance of excellent communication and stakeholder management skills.

We've observed senior partners leaving their employers to establish their own practices together with their former team. This move allows them greater control over client and project selection, business management, and the opportunity to establish a new working culture.

In-house legal teams within the commercial sectors are increasingly merging legal and compliance functions and streamlining governance and compliance processes related to regulatory policies and framework, training and internal governance controls such as data protection, anti-bribery & corruption (ABAC), whistleblowing, environmental and sustainability policies has become more evident. Employers are also seeking strategic legal professionals with strong commercial acumen, as well as agility to establish innovative solutions to regulatory challenges and varying business needs.

Senior legal professionals who move from private practices to in-house roles are often motivated by the desire to continue practising law while honing their commercial skills. Furthering their career in in-house roles allows them to focus on legal work without the pressures of business development responsibilities that are typically expected from them if they were to progress to Partner level in the firm. In-house positions also often provide a better work-life balance, as lawyers have greater flexibility in managing their workloads and deadlines.

However, candidates may need to be flexible with salary negotiations, as in-house roles typically do not offer the same significant pay increases as Private Practice. Legal professionals transitioning from private practice to in-house roles should be proficient in drafting commercial contracts, giving corporate lawyers a competitive edge.

“more corporate secretaries are expected to take on governance advisory roles.”

legal talent expectations

Talent expectations in Malaysia's legal industry remain consistent with previous years. Legal professionals value the ability to work from home where they can have the flexibility to focus on work or have confidential discussions in a more comfortable space. They also prioritise working with teams and managers they connect with.

Some of the key considerations for talent are:

Scope of work: Candidates are evaluating the breadth of their responsibilities and opportunities for upskilling and promotion within organisations.

Internal mobility: Despite an increase in local job opportunities, many candidates showed interest in exploring roles in markets like Singapore and Hong Kong, where average salaries are typically higher.

Salary expectations: Legal professionals typically anticipate a 30% salary increase when changing employers. However, employers often negotiate salaries due to lower market increment rates. Consequently, companies are expected to manage internal equity while focusing on overall prospects.

As the market evolves, understanding these expectations is crucial for employers seeking to attract and retain top legal talent.



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legal.

roles	years of experience	low	medium	high
legal director / chief legal officer / group general counsel	> 20	40,000	45,000	55,000
head of legal & corporate services / head of legal & compliance	> 20	30,000	40,000	45,000
head of legal	> 15	25,000	30,000	40,000
regional senior legal counsel	> 10	20,000	25,000	30,000
regional legal counsel	> 7	13,000	16,000	20,000
senior legal manager	> 10	18,000	22,000	25,000
legal & compliance manager	> 7	13,000	16,000	18,000
legal manager / legal counsel	> 7	13,000	16,000	18,000
assistant legal manager	> 5	8,000	9,000	10,000
senior legal executive	> 3	6,000	7,000	8,000
head of data protection	> 15	25,000	30,000	40,000
regional data protection manager	> 10	18,000	20,000	25,000
regional data protection officer	> 7	13,000	16,000	20,000
privacy counsel	> 7	13,000	16,000	20,000
head company secretary / named company secretary (PLC)	> 15	22,000	28,000	35,000
head company secretary (private limited)	> 15	20,000	25,000	30,000
senior manager company secretary	> 10	16,000	19,000	22,000
manager company secretary	> 7	12,000	15,000	18,000
assistant manager company secretary	> 5	8,000	9,000	10,000
senior executive company secretary	> 3	5,500	6,500	7,500

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)



manufacturing.

Manufacturing is enjoying strong growth in Malaysia, driven by Western companies looking to diversify supply chains, Chinese companies adopting the China Plus One strategy, and strong government investment support.

High-tech industries such as semiconductors and electric vehicle manufacturing are attracting significant investment, and competition for talent in skilled roles is fierce. In part as a response to talent shortages, companies are increasingly focussing on process optimisation and automation.

semiconductors create skill shortage

The semiconductor industry looks set for growth in 2025 after overcoming some of the supply chain issues that have been holding it back. Penang in particular looks set to benefit from this growth, and is currently upgrading its electricity and water supply to cope with expected future demand.

Malaysia is a particularly attractive destination for Chinese companies looking to follow the China Plus One strategy due to relatively lower costs and strong Chinese language skills. In a single deal last year three Chinese companies agreed to invest USD100 million in the state, for example.

But Western companies such as Germany's Infineon are also investing in Malaysia as they look to diversify supply chains.

This is good news for candidates but less so for employers, who face huge competition for engineers in particular. Malaysia's universities produce around 5,000 engineering graduates each year, but the growth in the semiconductor industry alone demands around 30,000.

We're seeing employers partner with universities and work with industry bodies such as the Malaysia Semiconductor Industry Association to get the first choice of candidates. While the industry's small size once meant hiring through personal connections was relatively easy, we're also seeing increasing use of professional headhunters to fill vacancies as it grows.

electric vehicles pick up speed

Electric vehicle sales grew significantly in Malaysia in 2024, and that trend is likely to continue in 2025 as more Malaysians change their preferences, encouraged by government incentives. While many of those sales have gone to imports, local brands are also entering the sector, with Malaysian carmakers Proton and Perodua planning to debut their EVs in 2024.

Despite the percentage growth in EV sales, the absolute number remains small, accounting for just 3.3% of total vehicle sales in the first half of 2024, held back in part by high costs and limited charging infrastructure.

Nevertheless, the sector is seeing significant investment both from local brands and foreign carmakers, thanks in part to government support such as tax exemptions and a waiver on import duty for locally assembled EVs.

Much of the investment will focus on research and development and engineering, with roles related to EV technologies, battery systems, and autonomous vehicle design in high demand.

While there is a pool of talent with EV experience in Malaysia, the growing industry means demand is starting to outstrip supply. The good news for hiring managers is that experience in industries such as electronics and semiconductor manufacturing, which are well established locally, is fairly easily transferrable. Companies who are prepared to invest time and training to close those few gaps that remain will find it much easier to find the talent they need to take advantage of the growth in this sector.



talent demand
for EV technologies, battery systems,
autonomous vehicle design, R&D &
engineering will increase.

automation gaining importance

We're seeing many manufacturers, particularly in the automotive, electronics, semiconductor, chemicals, and food and beverage sectors, adopting process automation to address talent shortages and improve operational efficiency and quality.

Automation in these sectors focuses on creating "equipment-centric" operations, where machinery plays a central role in driving production. Companies are also investing in further digitalisation involving machine learning and Internet of Things (IoT), process optimisation and supply chain management to ensure smoother, more efficient operations that can support growth.

A significant aspect of this shift is upskilling the existing workforce to operate upgraded systems. Companies are investing in certifications and technical training to help current employees adapt to new technologies and automation tools. This approach not only improves efficiency but also helps retain employees, particularly younger workers who are more likely to benefit from continuous learning opportunities. Some companies are even using this training to bond workers, effectively retaining them for a period in exchange for the qualification.

While automation generally reduces demand for workers, it does result in a greater need for robotics and automation specialists, as well as process optimisation roles. Candidates with these skills are highly sought after as companies look to leverage technology to stay competitive. There is still plenty of hiring for other skill sets, though we expect to see more of a focus on replacement hires rather than new positions.

focus on sustainability

Sustainability remains in its early stages in Malaysia, but we see two factors making it increasingly important. First, for Malaysian companies looking to export to Europe and other Western markets, strong sustainability credentials can provide a significant competitive advantage, as in some cases they are a basic requirement to access the market. And second, as Western companies set up operations in Malaysia, they bring with them their own compliance requirements, which may lead to other local companies following suit.

One of the key areas of focus is sustainable manufacturing, where companies are investing in cleaner technologies and processes to reduce their environmental footprint. As well as providing access to Western markets and meeting demand from increasingly eco-conscious consumers, this can also be used as part of an employer brand, enabling companies to match the values of younger candidates.

talent trends

We expect these roles to be particularly in demand in 2025:

- Automation and robotics engineers
- Process engineers
- R&D and product development engineers
- Sustainability and environmental compliance officers

We expect 2025 to be a candidate-driven market, with competition in niche roles with smaller talent pools. Candidates switching jobs can expect increments in the range of 15% to 20%, but we're also seeing companies look to stand out through additional benefits such as transport and accommodation allowances, particularly in remote areas.

We're also seeing companies turn to social media to build up an employer brand, focusing on career opportunities and working environments while countering some of the stereotypes the industry faces. Combined with training opportunities and career progression this can be a good way for employers to stand out in a competitive market.



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in-demand roles.

- automation & robotics engineers
- process engineers
- R&D & product development engineers
- sustainability & environmental
- compliance officers



manufacturing.

production and operations	years of experience	low	medium	high
production operator	1 - 3	2,500	3,500	4,500
production engineer	1 - 3	3,500	4,500	5,500
senior production engineer	4 - 6	5,500	6,500	7,500
assistant production manager	7 - 10	7,500	8,500	9,500
production manager	10 - 15	10,000	12,500	15,000
plant manager	15 - 20	15,000	20,000	25,000
quality and EHS				
quality assurance engineer	1 - 3	3,500	4,500	5,500
senior quality assurance engineer	4 - 6	5,000	6,000	7,000
assistant quality manager	7 - 10	7,500	8,500	9,500
quality manager	10 - 15	10,000	14,000	18,000
EHS officer	1 - 3	3,500	4,500	5,500
senior EHS officer	4 - 7	5,500	6,500	7,500
EHS manager	8 - 12	8,000	11,500	15,000
engineering				
mechanical engineer	3 - 7	5,000	7,000	9,000
process engineer	2 - 5	5,500	7,250	9,000
industrial engineer	2 - 6	5,000	7,000	9,000
electrical engineer	3 - 6	6,000	8,000	10,000
automation engineer	3 - 7	7,000	9,500	12,000
maintenance engineer	2 - 5	5,000	6,500	8,000
engineering manager	8 - 12	13,000	15,500	18,000
maintenance manager	6 - 10	10,000	12,500	15,000
automation engineering manager	8 - 12	13,000	16,500	20,000
manufacturing engineering manager	8 - 12	12,000	15,000	18,000
project engineering manager	8 - 12	14,000	17,000	20,000
industrial engineering manager	7 - 10	13,000	15,500	18,000

project management	years of experience	low	medium	high
project engineer	3 - 7	5,000	6,500	8,000
project manager	8 - 15	10,000	14,000	18,000
design and development				
design engineer	1 - 3	3,500	4,500	5,500
senior design engineer	4 - 6	5,500	6,750	8,000
assistant design manager	7 - 10	8,000	9,000	10,000
design manager	10 - 15	10,000	11,000	12,000
R&D engineer	1 - 2	4,000	5,000	6,000
senior R&D engineer	4 - 6	6,000	7,000	8,000
assistant R&D manager	7 - 6	8,000	10,000	12,000
R&D manager	10 - 15	10,000	14,000	18,000
ESG and sustainability				
sustainability officer	1 - 3	3,500	4,500	5,500
senior sustainability officer	4 - 7	5,500	7,000	8,500
ESG manager	7 - 15	10,000	14,000	18,000
c-suite and executive				
chief operating officer	15+	30,000	40,000	50,000
general manager	15+	25,000	35,000	45,000
operations director	10+	25,000	32,500	40,000
plant director	10+	25,000	32,500	40,000
manufacturing director	10+	20,000	27,500	35,000
engineering director	10+	20,000	27,500	35,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

sales and marketing. (retail and FMCG)

Changing consumer patterns and digital transformation continue to disrupt Malaysia's consumer industry. In 2024, the industry experienced notable growth, attributed to increased domestic spending and a rising demand for health and wellness products. These trends are expected to continue in 2025.

On the retail side, more fashion, food and beverage brands have entered the market, to provide more options and capitalise on changing consumer spending patterns. The presence of international brands in Malaysia has grown, alongside local franchises, with further expansion anticipated in 2025. In the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, companies have launched new products to either expand existing categories or introduce new products that cater to new consumer preferences, like healthier alternatives.

in-demand jobs and skills in sales & marketing

While retail and FMCG companies prioritise omnichannel strategies, enhancing customer experience is essential for their success. To achieve this, companies are expected to continue opening new stores that offer a holistic shopping experience, hence driving hiring activities for retail staff.

As more consumers shop online, we see a growing demand for office-based sales and marketing professionals in areas such as Retail Operation, Merchandising and E-Commerce.

In addition, FMCG companies are actively seeking talent for positions in Business Development, Key Account Management, as well as Brand, Marketing and Digital Management Sales.

We anticipate an increase in analytical roles in 2025, such as sales force effectiveness, consumer insights, new product development and innovation, as companies increasingly rely on data to enhance customer targeting and management strategies.

In-demand skills include:

- Data analytics using Microsoft Excel and Power BI
- Ability to business partner with other teams, including supply chain, procurement, as well as research & development
- Proactiveness to learn new platforms and processes while on-the-job or through external training
- Communication skills to be able to work effectively with stakeholders

emerging trends in talent mobility

A new talent trend that has recently emerged, and is expected to continue into 2025, is the increasing appetite for mobility.

More Malaysians are returning home from cities like Singapore and Hong Kong to seek local work opportunities.

Domestically, many professionals are open to relocating to different states to be closer to their families or to expand their job responsibilities. In response to stiff competition for talent, companies in regions such as Penang, Johor and Malacca are matching salary and benefits expectations.

Additionally, bolstered by the industry's growth, more individuals are re-entering the workforce after taking sabbaticals or career breaks. Despite having a larger talent pool, talent scarcity is likely to persist in 2025 as retail and FMCG companies expand their headcounts to meet evolving consumer demands and drive business growth.

in-demand skills.

- data analytics
- (Microsoft Excel, Power BI)
- business partnering
- learning mindset
- communications skills

new trends emerge in candidate assessments

While the time required to secure talent is generally reasonable — ranging from 6 to 8 weeks — more employers are now requiring candidates to undergo skills assessment tests. In the FMCG sector, employers often ask candidates to present strategic case studies, while retail positions typically require candidates to analyse specific data sets.

Most job seekers are open to skills assessments; however, they prefer to complete them toward the end of the interview process.

Candidates want to first engage with the hiring manager to understand the job scope and growth potential before investing time in assessments. Conducting assessments before interviews may be less appealing to some candidates who are unsure about the fit between the employer and the position.

In addition to assessments and achievements, employers are increasingly interested in understanding candidates' personalities and communication styles to assess their compatibility with the company culture and team dynamics.

talent expectations

Another emerging trend is that job seekers are becoming more assertive and vocal about their expectations, particularly regarding their work environment.

Flexible work arrangements, such as flexible hours and hybrid work options, remain important for office-based roles. Many candidates are also willing to negotiate trade-offs if work-life balance is important to them.

When switching employers, most candidates receive salary increases of 15% to 20%. However, those willing to take on additional responsibilities — such as managing a team or expanding their job scope — can often negotiate increases of over 20%.



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“candidates are becoming more certain, assertive and vocal about their expectations on flexible work and work environment.”



sales and marketing. (retail and FMCG)

sales - FMCG	years of experience	low	medium	high
chief executive officer	> 15	40,000	50,000	60,000
general manager	> 10	25,000	30,000	40,000
sales director / head of sales	> 10	20,000	25,000	30,000
national sales manager	> 8	18,000	20,000	23,000
regional sales manager	5 - 8	13,000	15,000	17,000
area sales manager	3 - 5	8,000	10,000	12,000
business development manager	5 - 8	9,000	12,000	15,000
export sales manager	5 - 8	9,000	12,000	15,000
national key account manager	> 8	18,000	20,000	23,000
group key account manager	5 - 8	14,000	15,000	17,000
key account manager	3 - 5	8,000	10,000	12,000
sales force effectiveness manager	4 - 8	10,000	14,000	18,000
marketing & communications - FMCG				
chief marketing officer	> 15	30,000	38,000	45,000
marketing director / head of marketing	12 - 15	25,000	35,000	40,000
marketing manager	> 8	15,000	20,000	25,000
senior brand manager	5 - 8	10,000	12,000	15,000
brand manager	3 - 5	7,000	9,000	12,000
digital marketing manager	3 - 8	8,000	10,000	15,000
trade marketing manager	5 - 10	10,000	13,000	18,000
consumer insights manager	5 - 8	12,000	15,000	20,000
retail				
country manager	> 10	25,000	30,000	40,000
head of operations / operations director	> 10	15,000	18,000	22,000
retail operations manager	8 - 10	10,000	13,000	18,000
area manager	5 - 10	6,000	8,000	10,000
store manager	5 - 10	7,000	9,000	12,000
merchandising manager	5 - 8	8,000	10,000	12,000
e-commerce manager	5 - 8	8,000	10,000	12,000
brand manager	5 - 8	8,000	10,000	14,000
retail trainer	5 - 8	6,000	8,000	10,000
marketing manager	6 - 10	9,000	12,000	15,000
public relations / communications manager	5 - 8	7,000	9,000	12,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

shared services.

The Shared Services industry is undergoing a significant transformation. After three years of rapid growth fuelled by foreign investments in establishing new shared services centres in Malaysia, hiring activity is expected to stabilise in 2025. Instead, we anticipate to see greater focus on strategic hiring aimed at expanding existing services and creating high-value jobs.

Several established shared services centres are expected to broaden their offerings to include EMEA and Americas markets, alongside their APAC portfolios. Companies are also investing in high-value roles related to robotic process automation (RPA) and AI.

Salary increment expectations for senior professionals when switching to a new employer are expected to remain at 20%. However, junior candidates can still negotiate for an increase between 20% and 30% if they demonstrate digital proficiency and meet new hiring criteria, as the Shared Services industry shifts towards providing more value-added services.

malaysia wins on having the best talent

Many global and regional companies continue to establish their first shared services centres in Malaysia, despite lower costs in the Philippines or India. Malaysia offers a highly skilled workforce capable of building robust foundations and processes that ensure alignment with organisational structures and compliance requirements.

expansions anticipated in procurement, manufacturing and supply chain

Hiring trends in shared services reflect broader global and national trends. Companies in technology, pharmaceuticals, and professional services have properly established their shared services capabilities, leading to a decline in large-scale hiring in recent months.

Instead, firms are prioritising the hiring of talent with specialised skills or expanding their geographical remit.

Large-scale hirings are now driven by the rapid influx of semiconductors, manufacturing plants, and data centres in Malaysia. Notably, procurement is emerging as a key trend, with more companies enhancing their procurement capabilities to optimise costs at a regional level.

government incentives and grants shaping hiring priorities

In Malaysia, eligibility for government incentives and grants is increasingly aligned with a company's digital capabilities.

Under the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint, organisations can benefit from [the Malaysia Digital Tax Incentive](#) when they leverage advanced technologies such as AI. [The 4IR Catalyst Grant](#) supports technology companies by covering up to 50% of project costs aimed at scaling operations and enhancing productivity.

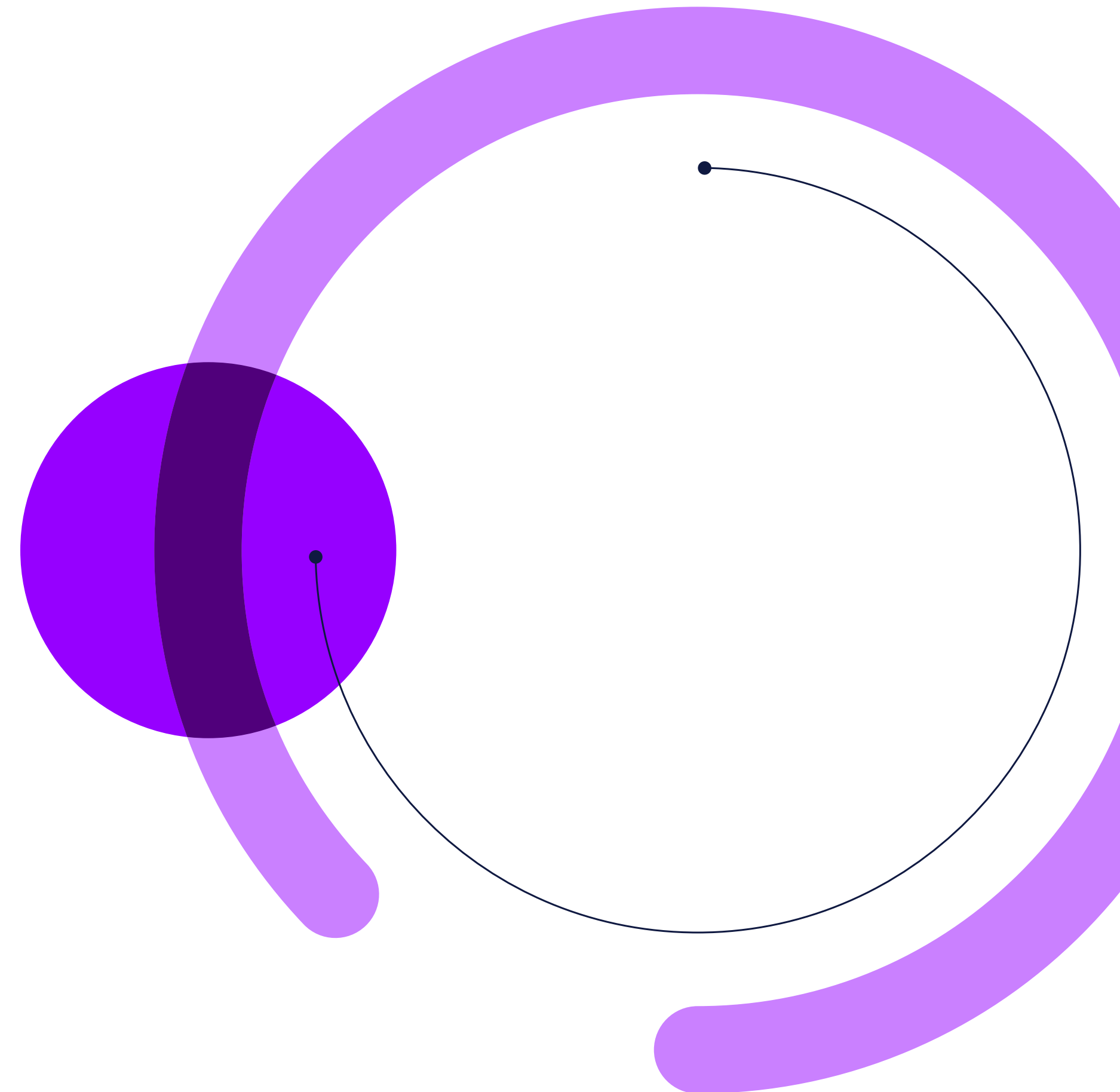
These initiatives encourage companies to adopt new technologies such as RPA and AI. As a result, organisations are either creating new high-value jobs in areas like data analytics and business intelligence or relocating these roles from other markets to Malaysia.

candidates are more sure of their expectations

Candidates are increasingly prioritising job satisfaction over high salary expectations, seeking workplaces where they can thrive. With significant changes in the global Shared Services industry, as companies diversify their resources, candidates are now more focused on a company's direction and career growth opportunities.

Flexibility in work arrangements has become crucial for shared services employees, who often work across different time zones. The flexibility to work from home or adjust hours helps them balance rest, social activities, and personal priorities.

“hiring in shared services is expected to happen in semiconductor, manufacturing, and data centres.”



hiring trends and in-demand skills

In response to these evolving expectations, companies are shifting away from creating large numbers of transactional-based processing roles. Instead, there is a growing emphasis on positions that involve business partnering and strategic planning.

As hiring expectations rise, employers are looking for candidates with:

- good communication
- stakeholder management skills
- proactive in driving continuous improvement processes
- Experience in continuous improvement, robotic process automation and advanced Excel are in high demand

Employers looking to recruit new headcount should intensify their hiring efforts in Q2, as this is when many shared services employees actively seek new opportunities after receiving their bonus payouts.



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in-demand skills.

- communications skills
- stakeholder management
- drives continuous improvement processes
- robotic process automation
- advanced Excel

shared services.

procure-to-pay (PTP)	years of experience	low	medium	high
analyst	0 - 3	3,500 - 3,900	4,000 - 4,900	5,000 - 5,500
senior analyst	3 - 5	4,500 - 4,900	5,000 - 5,500	5,600 - 6,000
specialist	5 - 10	5,600 - 6,500	6,600 - 7,000	7,100 - 7,500
team lead	8 - 10	7,600 - 8,000	8,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000
manager	11 - 13	12,000 - 13,000	13,100 - 14,000	14,000 - 16,000
senior manager	13 - 18	15,000 - 16,000	16,100 - 17,000	17,100 - 21,000
tower lead	> 18	18,100 - 20,000	20,000 - 22,000	> 22,100
order-to-cash (OTC)				
analyst	0 - 3	3,500 - 3,900	4,000 - 4,900	5,000 - 5,500
senior analyst	3 - 5	4,500 - 4,900	5,000 - 5,500	5,600 - 6,000
specialist	5 - 10	5,600 - 6,500	6,600 - 7,000	7,100 - 7,500
team lead	8 - 10	7,600 - 8,000	8,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000
manager	11 - 13	12,000 - 13,000	13,100 - 14,000	14,000 - 16,000
senior manager	13 - 18	15,000 - 16,000	16,100 - 17,000	17,100 - 18,000
tower lead	> 18	18,100 - 20,000	20,000 - 22,000	> 22,100
record-to-report (RTR)				
analyst	0 - 3	3,500 - 4,000	4,000 - 4,800	4,800 - 5,500
senior analyst	3 - 5	5,100 - 5,500	5,600 - 6,000	6,100 - 6,500
specialist	5 - 10	6,500 - 7,000	7,100 - 8,000	8,100 - 9,000
team lead	8 - 10	8,100 - 8,500	8,600 - 10,000	10,000 - 12,000
manager	11 - 13	12,000 - 13,000	13,100 - 15,000	15,000 - 17,000
senior manager	13 - 18	17,000 - 20,000	20,000 - 23,000	23,000 - 27,000
tower lead	> 18	19,100 - 20,000	20,000 - 26,000	> 26,000
treasury				
analyst	0 - 3	3,000 - 3,900	4,000 - 4,500	4,600 - 5,000
senior analyst	3 - 5	5,000 - 5,500	5,600 - 6,000	6,000 - 6,500
specialist	5 - 8	6,500 - 7,500	7,500 - 8,500	8,600 - 9,000
team lead	8 - 11	9,000 - 9,500	9,500 - 10,000	10,000 - 11,000
manager	13 - 15	11,000 - 13,000	13,100 - 14,000	14,100 - 15,000
senior manager	> 15	15,000 - 16,000	16,100 - 17,000	17,100 - 20,000
head of treasury	> 15	20,100 - 25,000	26,100 - 30,000	> 30,100

tax	years of experience	low	medium	high
analyst	0 - 3	3,000 - 3,500	3,600 - 4,000	4,100 - 4,500
senior analyst	3 - 5	4,500 - 5,000	5,100 - 5,500	5,600 - 6,000
specialist	5 - 8	6,000 - 6,900	7,000 - 7,500	7,600 - 8,000
team lead	8 - 11	8,000 - 8,500	8,600 - 9,500	9,500 - 10,000
manager	13 - 15	10,000 - 11,000	11,100 - 12,000	12,100 - 15,000
senior manager	> 15	12,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 18,000	> 18,100
financial planning & analysis				
analyst	5 - 7	8,000 - 9,000	9,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 11,000
specialist	7 - 10	10,000 - 11,000	11,000 - 12,500	12,500 - 14,500
manager	10 - 15	14,500 - 16,000	16,000 - 18,500	18,500 - 20,000
head of FP&A	> 15	18,500 - 20,000	20,000 - 25,000	> 25,000
internal control & compliance				
specialist	3 - 10	7,000 - 9,000	9,100 - 10,000	10,100 - 12,000
senior / department lead	10 - 20	12,000 - 15,000	15,100 - 20,000	20,100 - 30,000
project management				
project manager	6 - 15	10,000 - 12,000	12,100 - 16,000	16,100 - 20,000
project director	> 15	20,000 - 25,000	25,100 - 50,000	50,000 - 65,000
management roles				
SSC director	> 15	35,000 - 39,000	40,000 - 60,000	60,100 - 80,000
process owner - PTP/OTC/RTR	> 15	20,000 - 23,000	23,000 - 26,000	26,100 - 28,000

language proficiencies	additional monthly salary incentives (MYR)
japanese	1,500 - 2,000
korean	1,500 - 2,000
thai	800 - 1,500
vietnamese	800 - 1,500
europaean languages	1,500 - 2,500

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

technology.

Malaysia's tech industry is enjoying robust growth, with demand coming from cloud computing, AI, and foreign companies looking to leverage the country's strong skills and lower operating costs by setting up shared service offices. All that creates hiring demand, and is good news for skilled talent who may see increasing competition for their services.

But there's also a shift away from lower-skilled roles, meaning employers are being increasingly ambitious in the type of candidates they are looking for.

cloud grows; demand shifts

Cloud computing has been growing in Malaysia, driven by both global trends and substantial local investment. Key players such as AWS, Microsoft and Google, have made significant investments in the region, helping accelerate the adoption of cloud-based technologies. Oracle too announced a \$6.5 billion investment in the country in cloud and AI infrastructure in October 2024.

With that growth has come a shift in hiring, with traditional, lower-skilled support roles slowly being phased out in favour of DevOps engineers who can handle both support requirements and more highly-skilled tasks such as automation and deployment.

That has created a shortage of talent in the market. Dedicated tech companies and start ups have typically enjoyed an advantage here because they use more advanced technology, making for more exciting (and CV-boosting) work.

In the past, MNCs were often viewed as more stable than start ups. However, this distinction has blurred in recent years, as we witness restructuring at major companies and more start ups being successful. It can also be harder for MNCs using older technology to attract the best talent, especially when coupled with more rigid working practices. Savvy hiring managers are working around this by offering exciting projects plus the opportunity to make an impact on a larger scale to try to offset the perceived downside.

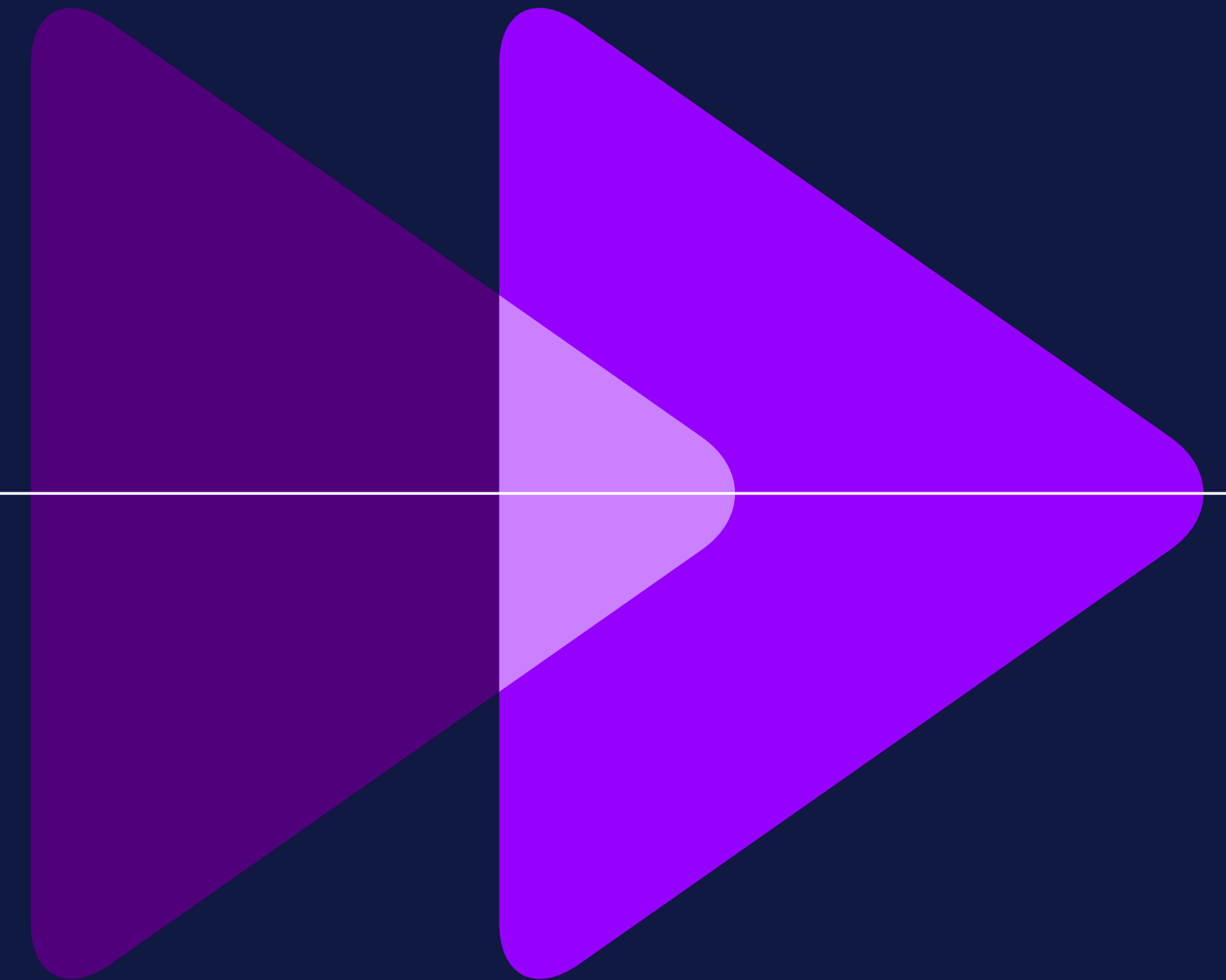
AI in trial mode

AI is certainly a growth area, but it remains in its infancy as companies try to figure out how it can benefit their bottom line. One of the key trends is the growing number of companies setting up AI Centres of Excellence to explore and implement AI technologies. However, this is typically still in the R&D phase, with companies focusing on smaller-scale projects to test the viability and potential business impact of AI technologies.

Rather than hiring large teams, many companies are partnering with technology vendors who can provide the services for them, with Microsoft, AWS and Google claiming most of the market. That creates demand for senior in-house roles such as AI solution architects, AI tech leads or AI specialists who can appoint and manage vendors and then oversee a project. However, there's a noticeable talent shortage for these senior roles, and many organisations are turning to foreign talent to fill these gaps.

The tech companies providing these AI solutions are generally hiring for a wider variety of roles, and there is a growing need for junior AI engineers and data engineers who can work on AI-driven projects. Many companies are also hiring talent with transferable skills from software engineering, particularly in Python, big data and cloud technologies who may not have AI exposure but who are willing to transition into AI-focused roles.

solutions architect, tech leads & project management are in high demand because of AI developments.



cybersecurity continues to grow

The growth of cloud services and AI has placed even more emphasis on cybersecurity, which was already a growth area in Malaysia. Both the private sector and government have significantly invested in enhancing their cybersecurity capabilities, including a new Cyber Security Act introduced in mid-2024, which tightens requirements for sectors deemed critical.

There is a rising demand for professionals specialising in governance, risk management, and compliance.

As data protection regulations become more stringent, including revisions in 2024 to Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act, companies are increasingly looking for experienced cybersecurity professionals who can help develop and enforce security strategies. These roles are typically senior and require a strong technical background in security combined with expertise in managing risk and legal compliance. We also see strong demand for penetration testers, network security engineers, and security analysts who can detect vulnerabilities and prevent cyberattacks, particularly in the financial services and telecoms sectors.

shifting software skills

As in many markets, software development is undergoing a shift in Malaysia as routine coding is increasingly automated, or at least augmented, by AI. That reduces demand for less skilled developers, but conversely, we see continued demand for talent with advanced technical skills, in particular those who can work across multiple project types.

Employers increasingly want full stack developers rather than, say, those with experience on the backend only, but these candidates are in relatively short supply. Candidates who take it upon themselves to learn new skills, or those with experience at smaller companies and start ups where teams are necessarily generalist, will find themselves in demand.

data centres will need talent, just not yet

Data centres are seeing huge growth in Malaysia, driven in part by a migration out of Singapore, but most of these projects remain in the construction phase. Although this growth will eventually translate into an increase in hiring demand for tech talent, we don't expect to see that take effect until operations start, which could be as early as 2027.

One challenge that's already being felt though is the location: Malaysia has two main data centre hubs, one near Kuala Lumpur and one in Johor Bahru. The latter can prove a challenging location to persuade candidates to relocate to. That may change as it develops as a regional tech hub, but in the shorter term, a professional recruiter can help companies bridge the gap.

salary trends in 2025

Candidates moving jobs in 2025 could expect an increase in the region of 25%. More junior roles, where 25% might not translate into a large difference in absolute terms, might expect a higher increment between 30% and 35%, or perhaps up to 50%, depending on talent's skill set, experience and current salary.

Senior talent will have to content themselves with less than that, but we do see particularly niche roles, such as pockets of cloud security, where experienced staff might command 30% to 40%.



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in-demand jobs in cybersecurity.

- penetration testers
- network security engineers
- security analysts



technology.

cybersecurity, GRC & IT audit	junior	middle	senior
chief information security officer	30,000	55,000	80,000
lead / manager / head of cybersecurity / GRC / IT audit	15,000	22,000	30,000
security architect	15,000	22,000	30,000
cloud security / DevSecOps / application security	8,000	16,000	25,000
penetration testers	6,000	14,000	22,000
SOC manager	10,000	15,000	20,000
identity & access management	4,000	11,000	18,000
IT governance / IT risk / cyber risk	6,000	10,000	15,000
IT audit	6,000	10,000	15,000
security analyst / security engineers / SOC engineer	4,000	8,000	13,000
network security	4,000	8,000	13,000
data governance	6,000	20,000	35,000
cloud			
cloud architect	13,000	24,000	35,000
lead cloud engineer (operations / support)	10,000	15,000	20,000
senior cloud engineer (operations / support)	9,000	12,000	15,000
cloud engineer (operations / support)	4,000	6,000	9,000
DevOps / SRE lead	15,000	22,000	30,000
senior DevOps engineer / SRE	12,000	16,000	20,000
DevOps engineer / SRE	4,000	8,000	12,000
IT infrastructure			
infrastructure lead / head of IT infrastructure	15,000	22,000	30,000
infrastructure architect	15,000	22,000	30,000
network architect	15,000	25,000	35,000
network engineer	5,500	11,000	17,000
wintel engineer	5,000	9,500	15,000
linux engineer	5,000	9,500	15,000
virtualisation engineers (VMware, HyperV, Citrix)	6,000	10,000	17,000
microsoft administrators	6,000	12,000	20,000
tech support / helpdesk / desktop support	3,500	7,500	12,000
DBA (MSSQL, Oracle, PostgreSQL, DB2)	6,000	12,000	20,000

enterprise applications	junior	middle	senior
ERP lead / manager	15,000	22,000	30,000
solution architect	18,000	24,000	30,000
SAP functional consultants (FICO, MM, SD, SF)	5,000	11,500	20,000
SAP technical consultants (ABAP, Basis)	5,000	11,500	20,000
SAP support (L1 to L3)	5,000	11,500	20,000
oracle consultant (Fusion, EBS, Netsuite, PeopleSoft)	5,000	11,500	20,000
salesforce developers	5,000	11,500	20,000
tech sales			
regional sales manager / head of sales / sales director / country head	20,000	42,000	70,000
senior business development specialist	15,000	30,000	50,000
business development / sales manager / account manager	6,000	12,000	20,000
junior sales / business development executive	3,000	4,000	5,000
pre-sales manager	10,000	15,000	20,000
pre-sales specialist / pre-sales solution architect	7,000	18,000	25,000
junior pre-sales	4,000	5,000	6,000
project management			
transformation specialist / head of transformation	20,000	30,000	40,000
change manager	7,000	11,000	15,000
project director / head of project management	20,000	35,000	50,000
program manager	15,000	25,000	35,000
project managers	11,000	22,000	35,000
technical project manager	11,000	22,000	35,000
project management officer	9,000	17,000	25,000
project analysts / project coordinators	3,000	4,500	6,000
agile coach / agile specialist / head of agile	18,000	24,000	30,000
scrum master / head of scrum	15,000	22,000	30,000
service delivery manager / technical delivery manager	13,000	19,000	25,000
business analysis			
business analysts	4,000	6,500	9,000
technical business analyst / systems analyst / solutions analyst	5,000	8,500	12,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)

technology.

	junior	middle	senior
product & design			
head of product / chief product officer	20,000	32,000	45,000
product specialist / owner / manager	12,000	13,000	25,000
UI/UX designer	4,000	13,000	25,000
graphic designer	4,000	7,000	10,000
game developer	4,000	8,000	12,000
software engineering (front end, back end, fullstack - C#.Net, JavaScript, Java, Golang, etc.)			
software engineer	3,500	10,000	17,000
solution architect	15,000	25,000	35,000
tech lead	10,000	17,000	25,000
head of engineering / head of application	20,000	35,000	50,000
software tester (manual)	5,000	10,000	15,000
software tester (automation)	6,000	12,000	18,000
data engineering, data science, artificial intelligence, machine learning			
data analyst / business intelligence	5,000	10,000	17,000
data scientist	6,000	15,000	25,000
data engineer	6,000	15,000	25,000
data architect	18,000	26,000	35,000
head of data	20,000	30,000	40,000
chief data officer	40,000	50,000	60,000
artificial intelligence & machine learning	6,500	15,000	25,000

*Figures are in MYR and based on a basic monthly salary of a permanent role (not including AWS or fixed/variable bonus)



contracting.

In Malaysia, there is a noticeable trend towards the hiring of contract talent by global organisations and start ups, particularly in sectors such as technology, manufacturing, food and beverage, and retail.

The primary motivations for companies opting for contractors over permanent employees include the immediate need for project support and a strategic focus on cost savings, often driven by directives from their global headquarters.

hiring contract talent to explore malaysia's market potential

An intriguing trend has emerged among companies hiring contract talent: many organisations are exploring the feasibility of Malaysia as a viable market for their operations.

This trend is particularly noticeable among firms from China and the Middle East, which are actively seeking local contract workers to help them navigate the Malaysian business landscape.

By employing contract talent, these companies can gain valuable insights into market conditions, consumer behaviour, and operational challenges without committing to long-term employment. Currently, they are also hiring management teams on a contract basis as a start, typically comprising heads of departments, before they establish their long-term presence in Malaysia.

In addition to management, these organisations are bringing on other senior professionals on a contractual basis, such as HR managers and office administrators, who play crucial roles in setting up local operations. They may also hire finance leads to establish financial processes and ensure compliance with local regulations.

contract roles are on the rise as companies adapt to changing demands

A significant trend in the hiring landscape is the increasing preference for talent who are open to contract roles for specific projects, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure and digital transformation.

Many companies, especially those in technology, are hiring contract workers to develop new products, such as mobile applications or to integrate processes as part of their transformation initiatives.

This trend is prominently observed among global multinational corporations, e-commerce platforms, and fintech firms, where contract roles are often found in areas like mobile design, content creation, advertising, and digital marketing.

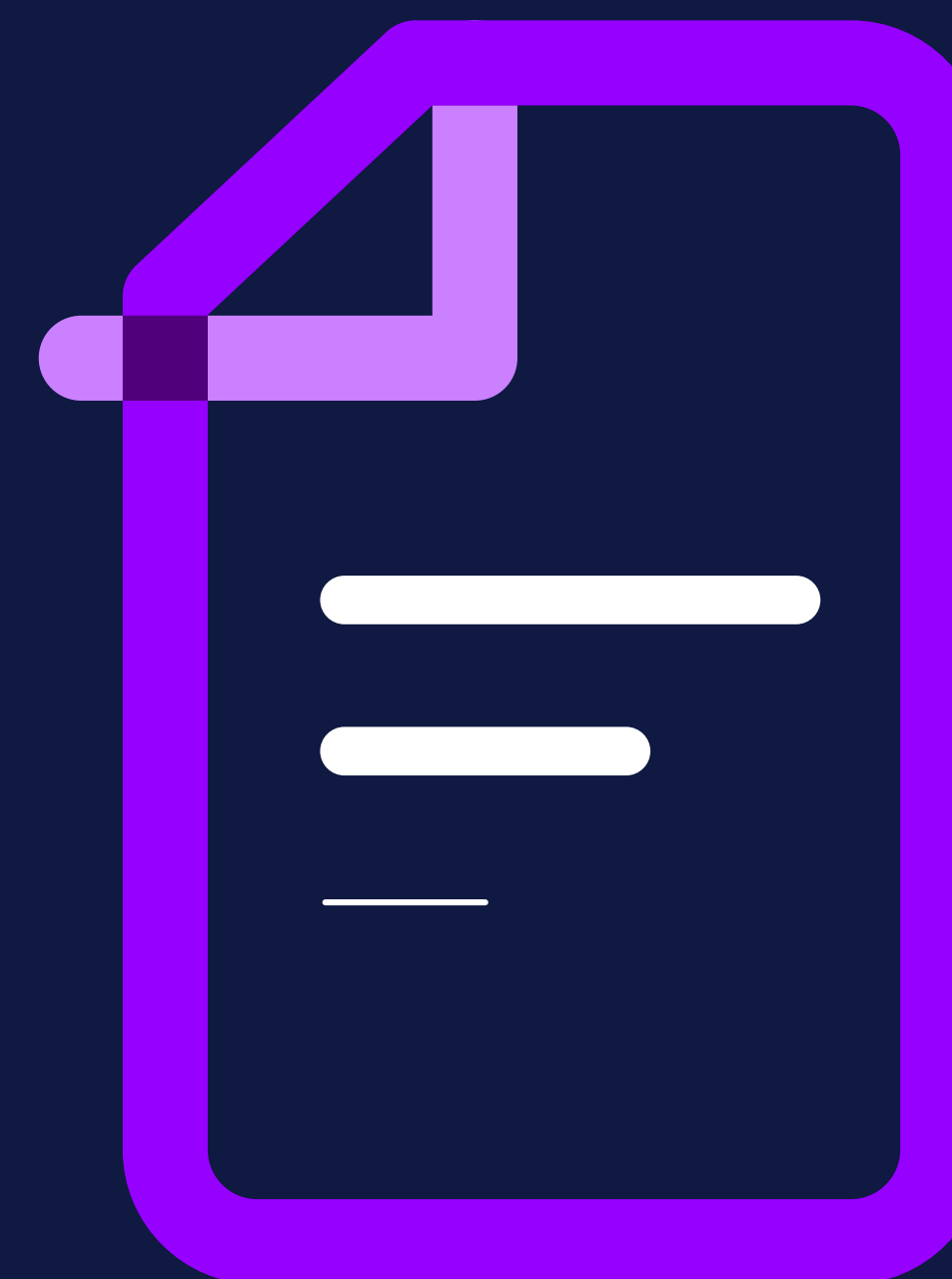
In non-technology sectors, such as infrastructure and manufacturing, contract positions are typically focused on operations, project engineering, and project management.

The customer service sector also increasingly hires contract workers due to budget constraints and headcount limitations.

Many organisations opt to employ customer service representatives on a contract basis while outsourcing employee benefits and payroll management to talent agencies. The key qualifications for these roles include a customer-oriented mindset, strong communication and problem-solving skills, and proficiency in multiple languages such as English, Chinese, and Bahasa Melayu to effectively serve customers remotely.

in-demand jobs.

- advertising
- content creation
- digital marketing
- mobile design
- operations
- project engineering
- project management



senior consultants embrace contract roles for flexibility and growth

We have observed a group of senior consultants who do not need persuading when it comes to contract job opportunities. They value the flexibility and challenge that comes with the job rather than long-term commitment.

The flexibility is not indicative of a lack of loyalty; rather, it reflects an understanding that these professionals are often not planning to stay with a single organisation for an extended period. Many are eager to move on quickly after they have delivered their services, especially as they look to negotiate higher salaries in their next contracts.

For example, SAP consultants who have previously worked with various organisations are actively mapping the job market to identify new opportunities. This trend highlights a broader shift in the workforce where some professionals in Malaysia prioritise agility and the potential for career advancement over traditional job security.

To effectively attract experienced and well-networked contract professionals, employers must be prepared to offer competitive compensation and exciting challenges.

Given their extensive backgrounds and industry connections, these individuals often command higher salaries, reflecting their value in the marketplace.

However, financial incentives alone may not suffice; these professionals seek roles that provide them with opportunities to engage in meaningful problem-solving and tackle complex challenges.

Employers should emphasise the unique projects and innovative initiatives available within their organisations, showcasing how these roles can offer both professional satisfaction and the chance to make a significant impact.

We will likely see a larger senior contracting talent pool in 2025, as more experienced and technically skilled professionals seek to leverage the market's growth opportunities to fast-track their careers.

companies respond to talent expectation for longer contract durations

Despite these attractive contract work opportunities, job stability remains a top concern for many workers.

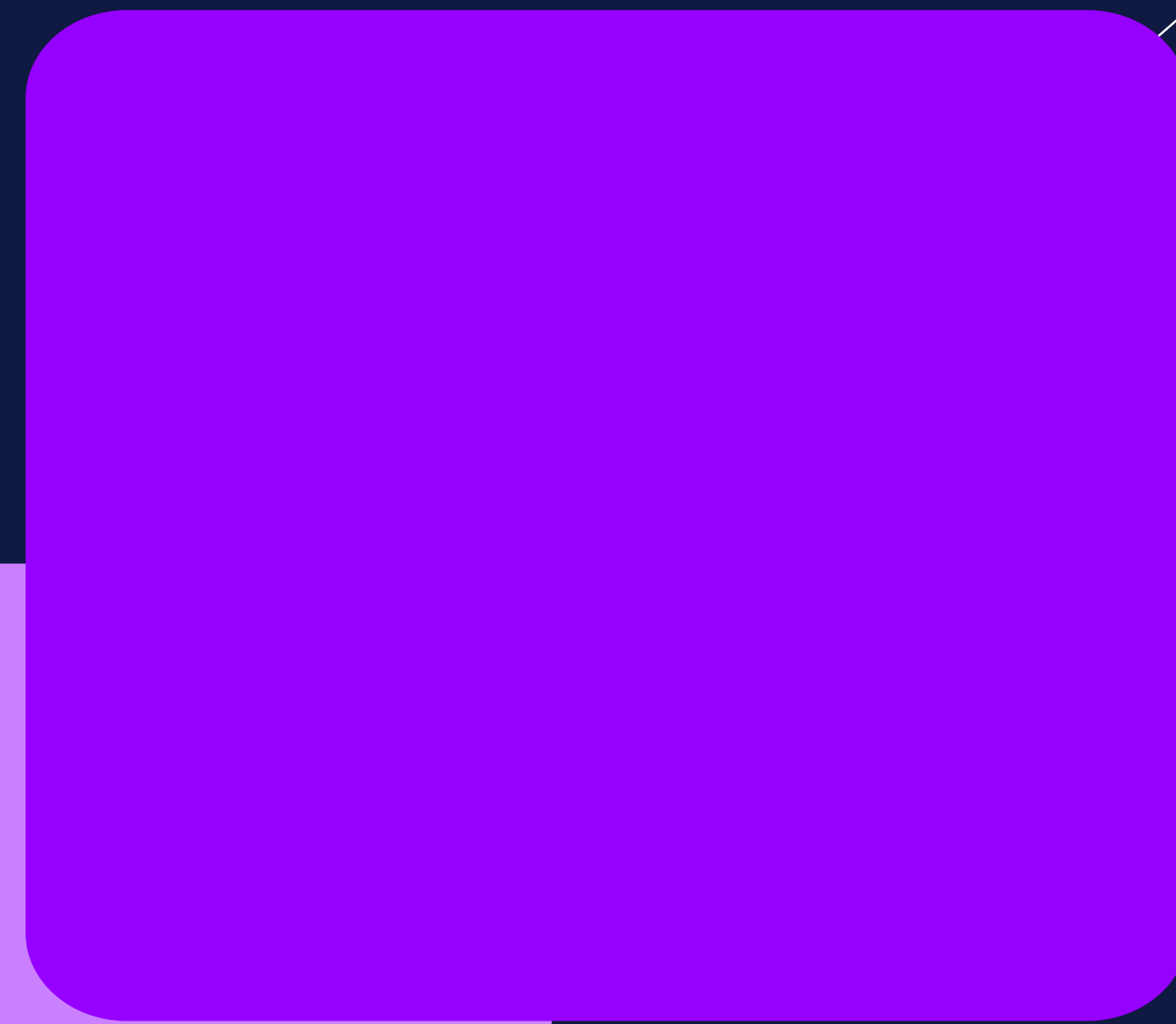
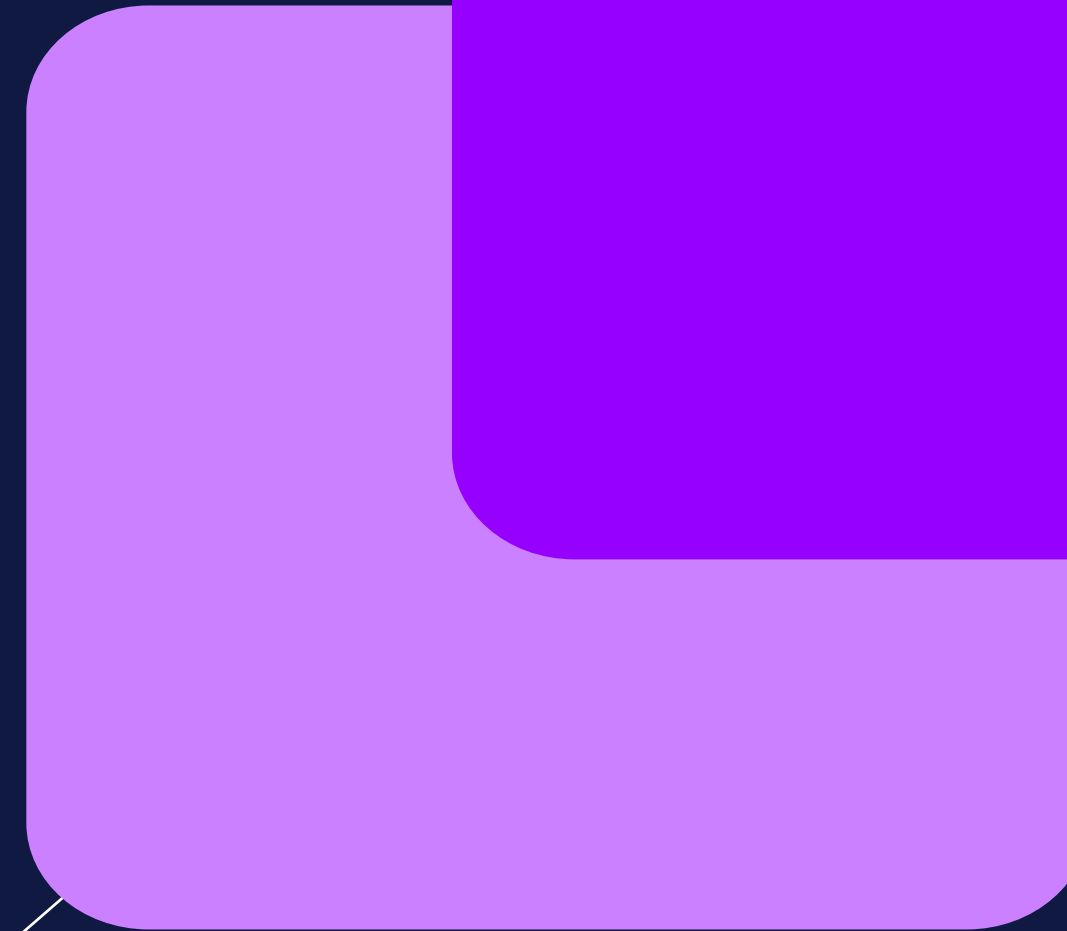
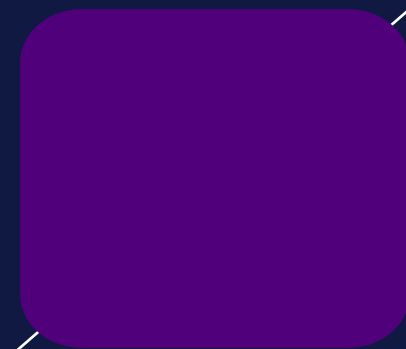
To address this demand for stability, some companies are now offering longer contract durations—typically two years instead of one—to provide a greater sense of security for those open to contract roles. More candidates are open to such opportunities as it offers them some levels of stability, not only for financial reasons but also to avoid the stress associated with frequent job searches.



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“senior contract workers seek roles to engage in problem solving to tackle complex challenges.”

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