



# Advancing Beyond Recovery:

2023's key insights on talent  
in Mainland China, Japan,  
India & Singapore

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# Message from our CEO

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**Hiroki Nakashige**  
CEO,  
RGF International Recruitment

In many ways, 2022 was a pivotal year for Asia-Pacific countries. The region emerged from the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, with society and businesses learning to live with the “new normal”.

However, recovery in the hiring market has been uneven at best. Most global MNC’s subsidiaries in Asia, fearful of a worldwide recession, have remained cautious. External forces—geopolitical tensions, a worldwide recession and resulting inflation among them—continue to impact the region’s recovery, with results varying from country to country, and from industry to industry.

Singapore and India have acutely experienced the effects of global disruption; this has resulted in a shortfall of available jobs in both countries.

In Japan, talent responded to economic and internal workplace factors by seeking more opportunities to work for global companies.

Meanwhile, Mainland China, which experienced a surge of COVID-19 cases in late 2022 and ongoing market disruption, saw its talent take a wait-and-see attitude: respondents from the country opted to weather volatility and stay put until the impact of the pandemic and external factors on their industries became clearer.

Across the region, working from home evolved into hybrid working arrangements and a more focused approach to in-office days. Flexibility became a key post-pandemic retention enabler for many companies.

To navigate talent activity in this evolving environment, it is important to understand talent sentiments, priorities and motivations. We produce in-depth, country-specific annual talent reports based on RGF-owned data, compiled through targeted surveys across employees and employers in key industries.

“Advancing Beyond Recovery: Talent in Asia Consolidated Report 2023” highlights some key insights from our four Talent in Asia country reports in Mainland China, India, Japan and Singapore. This report looks into commonalities and outliers across the four markets. It aims to ascertain the reasons for talent to look for a new job or stay with their current one, know which factors they consider when evaluating job offers, measure their satisfaction with their compensation, learn what working arrangement works best, and understand their perception of their work-life balance.

We are pleased to share with you this consolidated Talent in Asia report. To learn more about the specific data points presented here, we encourage you to download the specific country reports for more in-depth analysis.

We hope the data-led insights in this research can inform your decision-making and strategy, and strengthen our position as your partner in this fast-changing recruitment landscape.





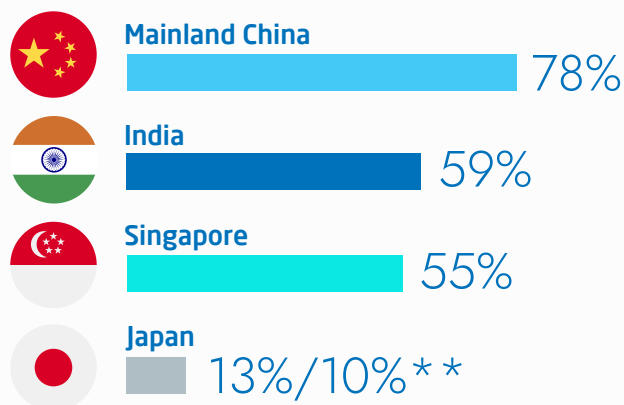
# Talent Insights at a Glance

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## Salary & benefits matter to job-seekers

Compensation and benefits packages were one of the most important factors to seek a new job.

### Percentage of respondents who said salary & benefits pushed them to look for a new job



\*\*These two figures reflect the Japan Talent Report's distinction between international talent (respondents who were interested in global jobs) and domestic talent (excluding the first group) respectively.

## Salary satisfaction varies across countries

In terms of satisfaction with compensation, Mainland China workers were the most satisfied (60%), nearly double the satisfaction rating in India, Japan and Singapore. Workers in Japan had the lowest rating for salary satisfaction: 45% of domestic talent and 37% of international talent were dissatisfied with their salaries.



## Factors to accept a job offer





When evaluating whether to accept a job offer, talent across the markets said that salary & benefits were the most important consideration.

Country	Salary & benefits
Mainland China	78%
India	72%
Japan	26.5% international 23.8% domestic
Singapore	80%

Career development opportunities were the second-most important factor in Mainland China (62%), Singapore (47%) and India (59%). For Japan, the second most important factor after salary was autonomy at work (selected by 16% of international talent and 18% of domestic talent.)

## Retention factors vary between countries

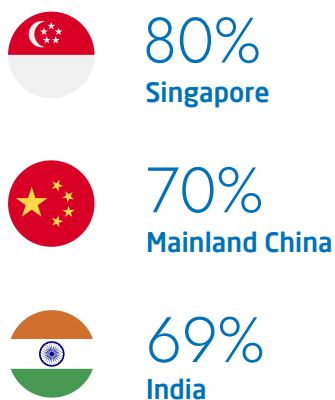
Reflecting the differing priorities between respondents, the reasons to remain in current jobs varied across the markets. There were more outliers in this category, although there remained some commonalities. We've listed common factors across the markets in the table below.

Retention factor	 Mainland China	 India	 Japan	 Singapore
Work-life balance	39%	46%	8% ("no overtime")	45%
Management style & workplace culture	21%	33%	18%	28%
Opportunities for career progression	24%	34%	15% ("opportunities for personal development")	29%

In Mainland China, the top reason cited by 51% of respondents to stay in their current jobs was external factors, such as the impact of the pandemic and global recession, that made seeking a new job unsustainable.

## Hybrid work and work-life balance

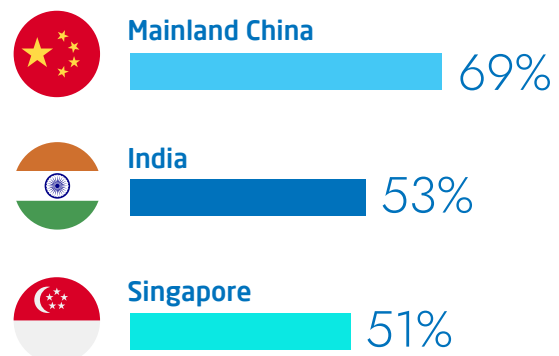
Employees from most countries preferred hybrid working arrangements, and rated these as the most beneficial for their productivity.



Japan was the outlier: 56% of respondents (57% of international and 55% of domestic talent) said working from the office was most beneficial for their productivity.

Respondents from countries where hybrid work was available and preferred by talent also rated their work-life balance more favorably.

### Percentage who rate their work-life balance as good or very good



\*Japan respondents were not asked to rate their work-life balance.





# Key Findings

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# Top reasons why talent are looking for new jobs

Salary and benefits is the main reason cited in three of the four markets that pushes talent to look for new jobs.



78%  
Mainland China



59%  
India



55%  
Singapore

In Japan, a high salary increase was one of the top factors cited by 12% of the respondents (13% of international and 11% of domestic talent), following uncertainty about their workplace's future (cited by 18% of international and 15% of domestic talent).





This correlates to Japan talent's answers when asked about their considerations for a career change: the majority of talent (75% of international and 76% of domestic) responded with "a company that aims for stability and solid business growth."

The second top consideration for a career change was "Salary compensation commensurate with performance evaluation," selected by 62% of international and 57% of domestic talent.

Mainland China talent were also concerned about future stability and uncertainty. Fifty-four percent of the country's jobseekers said they would look for a new job in an industry with a better outlook.

Opportunities for career progression was the second-top reason to look for a new job across the four markets: 62% Mainland China, 44% Singapore, 40% India and 31% Japan (presented as "to increase work fulfillment and work responsibilities").

Beyond common reasons such as salary and career progression, jobseekers cited other factors that were specific concerns in their countries. For example, management style and company culture played a part in pushing 37% of Singapore and 18% of India talent to look for new work.

In India, poor work-life balance (23%) and lack of training and development (15%) were also cited. Meanwhile, in Japan, 26% of jobseekers were also looking for opportunities to increase personal and professional development.

International talent — those who were interested in global roles — were also seeking to take on the challenge of a new position (14% of respondents) while 9% of domestic talent were looking to switch jobs owing to poor working conditions or work locations.



# Satisfaction with compensation

When it comes to satisfaction with their current salary packages, Mainland China talent were the most satisfied, with nearly double the satisfaction level in other countries.



60%  
Mainland China



39%  
India



37%  
Singapore



35% international talent  
29% domestic talent  
Japan





Based on our survey responses, there seems to be no correlation between the number of employees that received salary increases in the past year with overall salary satisfaction. For example, 65% of Indian talent received a salary increase, compared with 57% in Mainland China. Singapore also posted the largest year-on-year jump in salary increase, from 9% to 17%. Yet Mainland China respondents still posted the highest satisfaction rating.

One factor that could explain this is that talent in Mainland China received the highest average salary increase across the industries.

Country	% that received a salary increase in the last year	Average % salary increase	Overall satisfaction with salary
 Mainland China	57%	19% (+1% over 2022)	60%
 India	65%	15% (+3% over 2022)	39%
 Japan	Data not available	Data not available	35% international 29% domestic
 Singapore	52%	17% (+8% over 2022)	37%

In contrast, workers in Japan were mostly dissatisfied with their compensation. Forty-one percent of overall talent (45% domestic and 37% international) said they were dissatisfied with their salaries.



# Factors job-seekers value most when considering a new job offer

Across all four countries, competitive salary was the key factor that talent looked at when considering a new job offer.



Singapore

80%



Mainland China

78%



India

72%







Japan

27% international / 24% domestic





Talent across the four markets said they desired an average 26% salary increase when changing jobs. Talent in India had the highest desired increase percentage (36%). A generalized figure for salary increase was not available for Japan, although the Japan Talent Report contains graphs for “Ratio of current salary to annual salary by talent type and position,” which breaks the data down by annual salary. However, a mismatch persists between what talent perceive as a reasonable incremental increase when changing jobs versus the increase employers planned to give.




Country	Desired salary increase	Salary increase planned by employers
 India	36%	29%
 Mainland China	30%	26%
 Singapore	28%	19%
 Japan	Data not available	Data not available

For Mainland China (62%), Singapore (47%) and India (59%), career development opportunities were the second most important factor for evaluating a job offer. Management style and corporate culture was the third most important factor for Singapore (41%) and India (35%), while in Mainland China, it was industry prospects (54%).

In Japan, the second most important factor after salary was autonomy at work. This was driven by respondents who were ranked at manager-level and above (16% of international talent / 18% of domestic talent.) Work-life balance was the third top priority, cited by 11% international and 12% of domestic talent. Five percent of international talent also considered the ease of taking parental leave as a factor for choosing to take a new job.

The availability of flexible work options was also an important consideration in three of the four markets (Mainland China, India and Singapore). In Japan, hybrid working arrangements were not a factor for evaluating a job offer (more on this in the ‘Attitudes toward flexibility and work-life balance’ section). Rather, respondents said they preferred a job that did not require overtime.

## Ranking of flexible work options from new job offers

Flexible work option	 Mainland China	 Singapore	 India*
Hybrid (work from home and office) arrangements	51%	63%	62%
Flexible work hours	45%	58%	58%
Competitive annual leave entitlement	39%	54%	33%

\*India's top 3rd work option was compensation for weekend work, overtime, or working on public holidays, cited by 37% of respondents.

# Retention factors

When it came to staying with their current employers, respondents' motivations varied the most across the four countries. That said, there were a few common factors.

Work-life balance was the top retention factor for Singapore (45%) and India (46%) and the third highest factor for talent in Mainland China (39%). In Japan, work-life balance was not included in the choices for considering the ideal work environment for retention. However, 9% of respondents (9% of international talent and 8% of domestic talent) mentioned "no need to work beyond mandatory hours" as a retention factor. Work-life balance, meanwhile, was the third top priority of 12% of respondents (11% international / 12% domestic talent) for switching jobs.

## Work-life balance as top retention factor



# 45%

**Singapore**

Top retention factor



# 46%

**India**

Top retention factor



# 39%

**Mainland China**

Third highest retention factor





Management style and corporate culture was an important retention factor in India (33%) Singapore (28%), Mainland China (21%) and Japan (presented as “Good corporate culture and human resources” and cited by 17% international and 19% of domestic talent.)

Another common factor for retention was “opportunities for career progression,” selected by 34% of talent in India, 29% in Singapore and 24% in Mainland China. Talent in Japan took a more holistic perspective, with 15% of both international and domestic talent mentioning “opportunities for personal growth” as a retention factor. A further 10% of international talent mentioned “opportunities to hold positions of responsibility.”



In terms of outliers, Mainland China talent looked outward for reasons to stay with their current companies. External factors (such as COVID-19, recession and inflation) which made job-hunting difficult was the top retention motivator cited by 51% of respondents in Mainland China.

While salary and compensation was a common and important factor in choosing to look for a new job or evaluating a job offer, it was not as commonly selected as a retention factor. Only Singapore (42%) and Mainland China (38%) rated this as a motivating factor to stay with their employers.

# Attitudes towards flexibility and work-life balance

The majority of talent in Mainland China, Singapore and India all rated hybrid working arrangements (a mix of working from home and out of the office) as the model most beneficial for their productivity.



80%  
Singapore



70%  
Mainland China



69%  
India

When asked to rate their productivity, respondents from Mainland China said that on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 as the highest score, their productivity on hybrid arrangements was the same as working from the office (75%); while 65% of talent in Singapore rated their productivity on hybrid work arrangements as high.





With talent emphasizing the importance of hybrid work environments and its ability to impact work-life balance, it followed that most talent in countries that offered this hybrid work arrangement rated their work-life balance highly.

Sixty-nine percent of surveyed workers in Mainland China rated their work-life balance as good or very good – the highest satisfaction rating among the four countries. This was also a significant increase from 44% in 2021, the biggest year-on-year percentage jump among the four markets.

The majority of talent surveyed in India (54%) reported having a good or very good work-life balance in the past year. The availability of flexible working options or benefits may have contributed to this: 39% were offered hybrid arrangements combining working from home and in the office, 31% had flexible working hours, and 19% were allowed to work from home completely.

In Singapore, 51% rated their work-life balance as good or very good. This was a six-point increase over last year (45%) and correlates with the increase of hybrid arrangements (a 5% increase over the 50% recorded in 2022).

Japan remains the outlier in terms of the general preference for hybrid work. While 64% of international talent and 56% of domestic talent in Japan worked in places that offered hybrid/flexible working arrangements, only 41% of international talent and 35% of domestic talent were satisfied with their workplaces' flexible work arrangements. Overall, 57% of international and 55% of domestic talent in Japan preferred working from the office and rated it as more beneficial for their productivity. Most respondents also preferred to telework only one day a week.

Workers in Japan were not asked to rate their satisfaction with their work-life balance. However, when asked about their ideal career, 15% of international talent and 20% of domestic talent wanted to work in an environment that allowed for work-life balance. Given that more than half of survey respondents from Japan preferred working from the office, this could be taken to mean working only within assigned mandatory hours, which was ranked as the fifth feature of an ideal working environment by both international and domestic talent. This is further supported by 6% of both international and domestic talent ranking "not working overtime" as an important factor in choosing a new job.



# 69%

**Mainland China**

rated their work-life balance as good or very good



# 54%

**India**

rated their work-life balance as good or very good



# 51%

**Singapore**

rated their work-life balance as good or very good

# Conclusion

In the ever-evolving global business landscape, companies are facing increasing pressure to either expand their operations beyond their local markets, or adapt to new markets to sustain growth. Organizations need a well-thought-out talent strategy that aligns with their goals and objectives. Whether local companies aspire to go global or global companies aim to go local, a robust talent strategy becomes pivotal in ensuring a successful transition.

Employers and job seekers can glean a rich and varied selection of insights from the survey responses of workers in Asia from our Talent in Asia reports. These findings showcase prevailing attitudes towards compensation, job seeking and productivity. For employers, these insights are useful to calibrate strategies towards attracting, developing, and retaining the right talent. These are especially useful when companies seek global partnerships to streamline the hiring process, because the report insights can help to identify and attract candidates who possess the necessary skills and cultural fit.

Learn more about the sentiments of both talent and employers in Mainland China, India, Japan and Singapore: our Talent in Asia reports contain survey findings and insights that highlight respondents' sense of talent sentiment, talent activity, salary and compensation, and flexibility/work-life balance. You'll be able to access in-depth analysis and data-led recommendations that help companies and jobseekers generate actionable insights to inform their talent strategy.

Download the Talent in Asia 2023 report for your market today.





# About this Report

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RGF's Talent in Asia Report is conducted annually, with the aim of better understanding the needs and behaviors of candidates across four major Asia markets: Mainland China, Singapore, India, and Japan.

This report is based on RGF-owned data compiled via a targeted survey, completed in late 2022 across several key industry sectors.

Statistical analysis was conducted to further explore any correlation between the factors included in the survey.

Due to the real-time nature of some of this data, RGF encourages readers to use its insights at their discretion.

# By-country Reports



**Advancing Beyond Recovery:  
Talent in Asia 2023 Mainland China**



**Advancing Beyond Recovery:  
Talent in Asia 2023 India**



**Advancing Beyond Recovery:  
Talent in Asia 2023 Singapore**



**Advancing Beyond Recovery:  
Talent in Asia 2023 Japan**



# About RGF

RGF International Recruitment is a global brand of Japan-based Recruit Group and provides total recruiting solutions of superior quality that advance the career opportunities of individuals at all levels. Through unrivaled service, dedication to the best recruitment solutions and a commitment to our clients and candidates, RGF has grown rapidly to become one of the largest regional networks with 24 offices in 17 cities across Asia. We aim to unleash the potential of individuals and companies by providing consistently superior HR solutions.

For more information, market insights, and advice on career and talent search requirements, please visit <https://www.rgf-hr.com/>.

- 22+ years of history
  - Specialized across all industry sectors and job functions
- 10K+ placements per year
  - We find the best talent
- 17 cities in Asia
  - To support your regional recruitment needs

## Brands and services



### RGF Executive Search

Focuses on senior executives to middle management search to fulfill organizational goals, strategic planning development and overall decision making that affects the entire business organization.



### RGF Professional Recruitment

Hires managerial and specialist positions who are essential to the real work of the business dealing with the people, customers and teams driving the business cross-functionally. They can also be considered developmental candidates for executive senior leadership positions.



### RGF HR Agent

Fills a range of managerial, specialist and staff positions at Japanese companies that require Japanese language skills. Draws on a deep understanding of Japanese companies with a vast database of Japanese-speaking personnel to find the best candidates.