



Impact of workforce trends on employees

Insights from a study of recent workforce trends
in Singapore (2024)

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Introduction

Given the evolving economic landscape, Singapore is focusing on building a future-ready workforce with strong core and technical capabilities to achieve the 2030 vision



In 2023, Singapore experienced an **economic slowdown**, with GDP growth at **1.2%** and core inflation averaging **4.2%**¹, highlighting a persistent rise in living costs. Amidst these challenges, Singapore faces disruptive forces, namely **technological advancements, deglobalization, and geopolitical instability**. Addressing these challenges are crucial to maintain Singapore's global economic standing.



Demand for AI application skills has seen an **33% increase**², while job postings have grown by **75% since 2019**³. Additionally, companies such as Amazon Web Services is set to invest **S\$12 billion** until 2028 to grow capabilities across key domains such as **cloud infrastructure** given **growing customer demand**. Hence, there is an uplift in demand for workers to **stay employable** and **career mobile** through up-skilling and re-skilling.



Singapore's 2030 vision aims to cultivate a **resilient economy** with abundant opportunities for employees and organizations. The nation seeks to build and sustain a vibrant ecosystem of enterprises that are future-ready, globally competitive, and possess **deep innovative capabilities**⁴. Core capabilities such as **sustainability, internationalization, digitalization, and innovation** will be strengthened, fostering an environment conducive to growth.

Sources: ¹ Today Online | ² Lightcast | ³ Teamed Global | ⁴ Ministry of Trade & Industry

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline, likely Singapore, with numerous skyscrapers illuminated against a dark sky. The buildings are reflected in a body of water in the foreground. The image has a dark, teal-tinted overlay with a subtle pattern of small, light-colored dots. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Section 1

Workforce Trends in Singapore

Impact of workforce trends on employees

Amidst recent global layoffs in 2023 and 2024, we examined their local impact here in Singapore. We analysed Singapore's current landscape, identifying key shifts, their causes, and potential interventions that both individuals and organisations can contribute to.

3 Key Workforce Trends in Singapore



The Talent Paradox

What are the implications of the current state of Singapore's workforce for organisations and employees?



The Matchmaking Paradox

Despite the talent surplus, why are hiring managers still struggling to find talent and hire good talent?



The Skill Paradox

What skill sets are employers prioritising and investing in within the current job landscape?

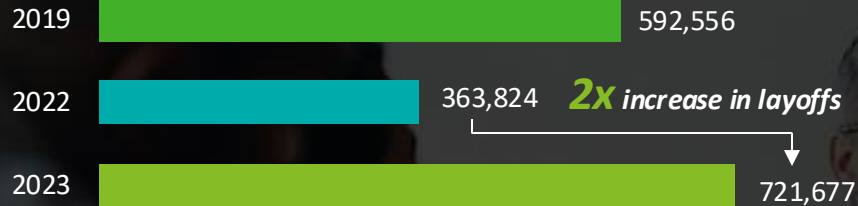


With the recent workforce changes, **individuals are expected to always be career-ready**. However, there is **also a need for organisations to drive organisational readiness** and be **talent ready** to leverage the full potential of today's workforce.

Note:¹Government support placement programmes, organisational resources on career counselling

The Talent Paradox | While there is significantly more talent in the market, job vacancies are falling

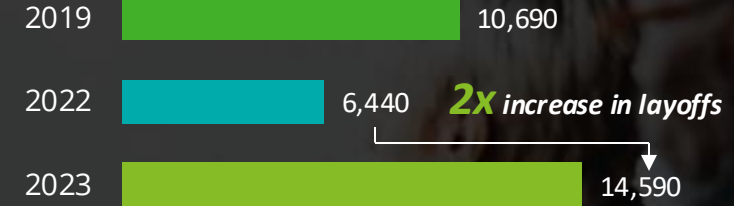
US-Based Companies



Top 3 Industries affected

1. Technology, Media & Telecomms (31%)^{1,6}
2. Consumer (11%)
3. Life Sciences & Healthcare (8%)

Singapore



Top 3 Industries affected

1. Energy, Resources & Industrials (24%)⁴
2. Consumer (20%)
3. Technology, Media & Telecomms (19%)



25%
Fall in job vacancies³

Our Perspective

Companies are focused on cost optimisation hence the redundancies for job vacancies

"It's about making the most of the team you already have and only scaling back if your level of efficiency warrants it." – Forbes Business Council, 2023

"AI is different because companies are integrating it into their operations so quickly that job losses are likely to mount before the gains arrive." – Harvard Business Review, 2023

Sources: ¹ Challenger, Gray Christmas & Inc | ² Straits Times | ^{3,4} Ministry of Manpower | ⁵ Channel News Asia | ⁶ AltIndex

The Matchmaking Paradox | Despite the talent surplus, organisations are still struggling to hire skilled professionals

Global

Hiring Managers struggling to find skilled talent¹ in 2023 vs pre-covid (2019)



44 days time-to-hire
The highest since 2019 (pre-Covid)^{3,6}



- Top 3 industries struggling to hire⁵**
1. Life Sciences & Healthcare (78%)
 2. Consumer (76%)
 3. Technology, Media & Telecomms (76%)

Singapore

Hiring Managers struggling to find skilled talent² in 2023 vs pre-covid (2019)



41 days time-to-hire
The highest since 2019 (pre-Covid)^{3,6}



- Top 3 industries struggling to hire⁵**
1. Financial Services (88%)
 2. Energy, Resources & Industrials (87%)
 3. Life Sciences & Healthcare (82%)

Our Perspective

Organizations are increasingly prioritizing specific skills over traditional qualifications when selecting candidates

“AI, Analytical and Creative Thinking will be top in-demand skills by 2027.” – World Economic Forum, 2023

In-demand workers are no longer those with degree and pedigree, but now those with will and skill – Boston Consulting Group, 2023

Sources: ^{1,2} Manpower Group | ³ LinkedIn | ⁴ Employment Hero | ⁵ Ministry of Manpower | ⁶ Josh Bersin

The Skill Paradox | Despite heavy investments from government & organizations to reskill workforce, Singaporeans are not actively pursuing reskilling programs

Sg Govt Reskilling Efforts



Budget 2024: Introduced **\$4,000 Credit top-up** for 7,000 upskilling and reskilling course through **SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme**¹

>\$1bn Invested from 2024-2029 into AI compute, talent & industry development by Singapore's government²

AI workforce growth y-o-y from 2024 to 2028³

3x



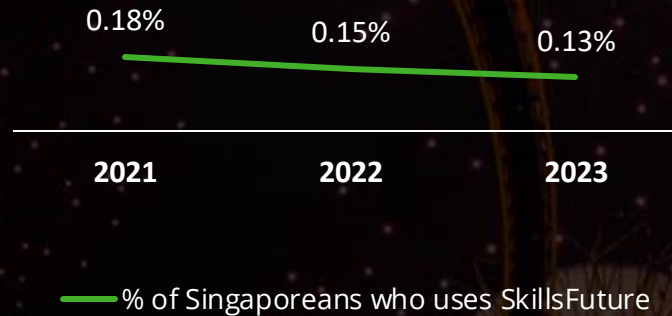
New Job Roles: Full-stack engineer, AI engineer, Data engineer



New Job Functions: Prompt engineering, Chatbot response

Low Public Uptake

SkillsFuture Enrolments (down 0.05%)^{4,5,6} (2021-2023)



Investments From Companies

SAMSUNG

Shifted from **manufacturer** of electronics to a **design powerhouse** boasting **1,600** in-house designers and raking **75 awards** at a prestigious German design competition in **2024**^{7,8}

DBS

S\$20M invested across **2017-2022** to adapt 10,000 Singapore employees to the future of work and become a digital-native workforce⁹

aws

S\$12 billion invested in SG's cloud and AI infrastructure, fostering job creation and offering training to empower businesses with AI adoption in **2024**¹⁰

Our Perspective

Some employees do not see the value in reskilling, relying instead on tools like GenAI for productivity

"...only between 35% and 55% are actively taking practical actions in career management to prepare for such changes." – Institute of Policy Studies, 2023

"62% of Singaporean workers who use Gen AI at work believe it has saved them time on work-related tasks, with more than two in five (42%) workers saving 10 or more hours" – SME Horizon, 2024

Sources: ¹The Business Times | ² | ³ | ⁴ | ⁵ The Straits Times | ⁶ Statista | ⁷ Harvard Business Review | ⁸ Samsung Newsroom | ⁹ DBS | ¹⁰ Channel News Asia



Section 2

Ground Insights

Impact of workforce trends on employees

Amidst recent global layoffs in 2023 and 2024, we examined their local impact here in Singapore. We analysed Singapore's current landscape, identifying key shifts, their causes, and potential interventions that both individuals and organisations can contribute to.

Interview insights from Singaporeans affected by layoffs or experienced mass layoffs



15 Participants

Interviewees shared their experiences of being laid off or going through mass layoffs in their companies



Diverse Industries

Employees interviewed represented various sectors including TMT, Financial Services, Consumer Goods, and Business Consulting



Varied Seniority Levels

Interviews included individuals ranging from entry-level positions to managers and heads of departments



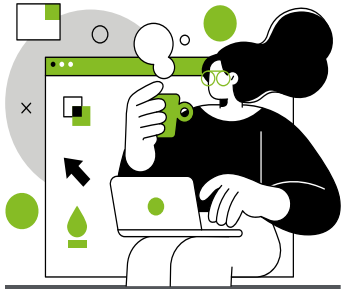
With the recent workforce changes, **individuals are expected to always be career-ready**. However, there is **also a need for organisations to drive organisational readiness** and be **talent ready** to leverage the full potential of today's workforce.

Note:¹Government support placement programmes, organisational resources on career counselling

Over the course of 2 weeks, we interviewed 15 employees across different domains

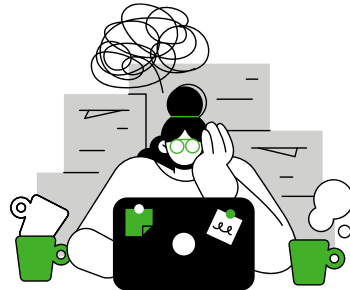
15 interviews from employees across varied industries:

Key Insights



1

Some career-ready talents were able to **foresee the layoffs and took pre-emptive steps** to find a new job



2

Many laid off employees had **performance evaluations** which **did not indicate poor performance**



3

Retrenched employees **did not utilise** career transitioning programmes¹ as its open-ended nature does not provide job security



4

Organisations announced news of retrenchment abruptly, giving employees **little to no time to prepare**



5

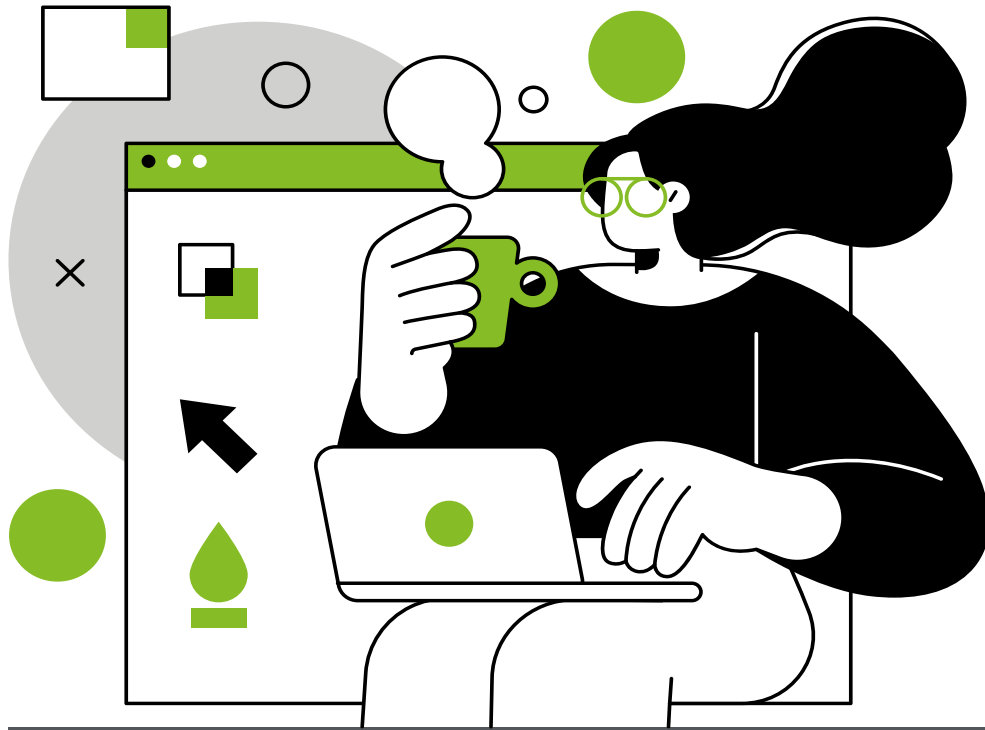
Retrenched employees who **received career transitioning support** from their companies were **successful in finding their next jobs**



Note: ¹Government support placement programmes, organisational resources on career counselling

5 Key Insights from 15 Interviews: Layoffs & Remaining Employees

- 1 Some career-ready talents were able to **foresee the layoffs and took pre-emptive steps** to find a new job



"I knew the company wasn't going to survive. I didn't have confidence there would be a place for me in the next 5 years, so I started passively looking for jobs."

- Anonymous (2023)



"I saw signs of retrenchment occurring within the company, starting from when my UK boss went back home, and our team was given a new scope of work with no KPIs tied to it."

- Employee, Large tech company (2023)

5 Key Insights from 15 Interviews: Layoffs & Remaining Employees

2

Many laid off employees had **performance evaluations** which **did not indicate poor performance**



*“When speaking to colleagues whom the laid off employees worked with, they have **nothing but good feedback**”*

- Anonymous (2024)

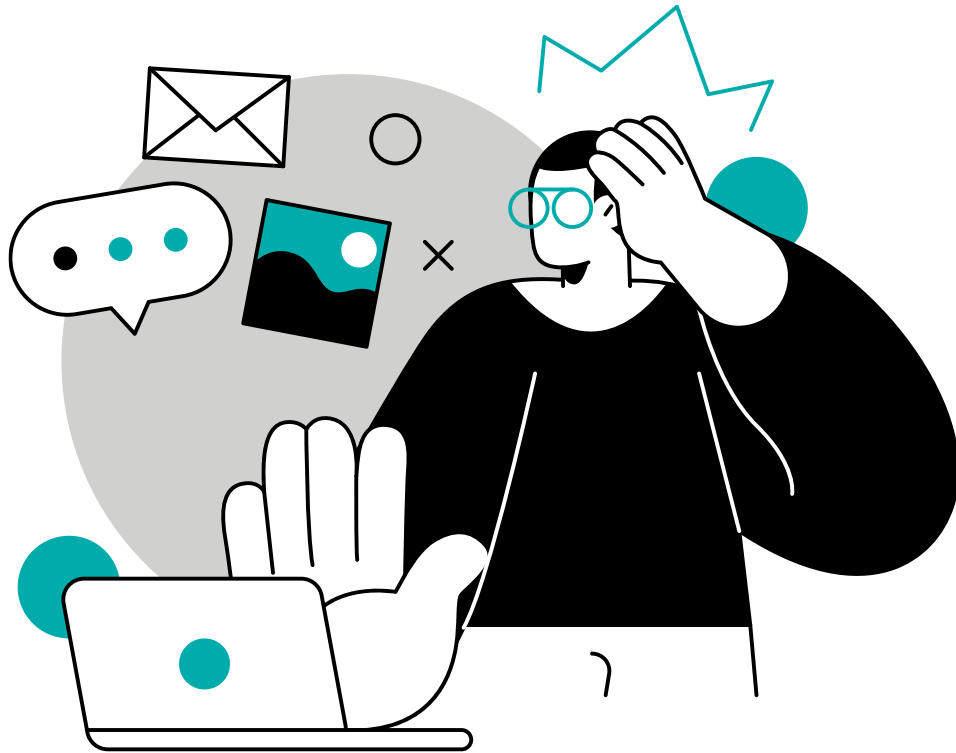


*“I’ve **consistently received the top performer award for three consecutive years**, yet in January, I was **unceremoniously laid off.**”*

- Anonymous (2024)²

5 Key Insights from 15 Interviews: Layoffs & Remaining Employees

- 3** Retrenched employees **did not utilise** career transitioning programmes¹ as its open-ended nature does not provide job security



*"I was provided with a career consultant and access to LinkedIn Learning on a monthly basis before I was laid off, but I **did not utilise them.**"*

- Employee, Large tech software company (2023)



*"I tried to explore internal mobility options, but the **process was so convoluted that I lost hope**"*

- Senior SWE, Large tech software company (2023)

Note:¹Government support placement programmes, organisational resources on career counselling

5 Key Insights from 15 Interviews: Layoffs & Remaining Employees

4 Organisations announced news of retrenchment abruptly, giving employees **little to no time to prepare**



*"It came **unexpectedly** - an email notified us that we would know **within the next hour** if we were affected by layoffs. There was **no proper communication or prior notice.**"*

- Employee, Large tech software company (2023)



*"I was scheduled to be on a client project until the end of the year, but it was **suddenly cut short with only one week's notice.**"*

- Senior Tech Analyst (2024)

5 Key Insights from 15 Interviews: Layoffs & Remaining Employees

- 5** Retrenched employees who **received career transitioning support** from their companies were **successful in finding their next jobs**



*"The **layoff process was transparent and structured**, and I felt **well supported** by the policies. I managed to **find a job within 3 months.**"*

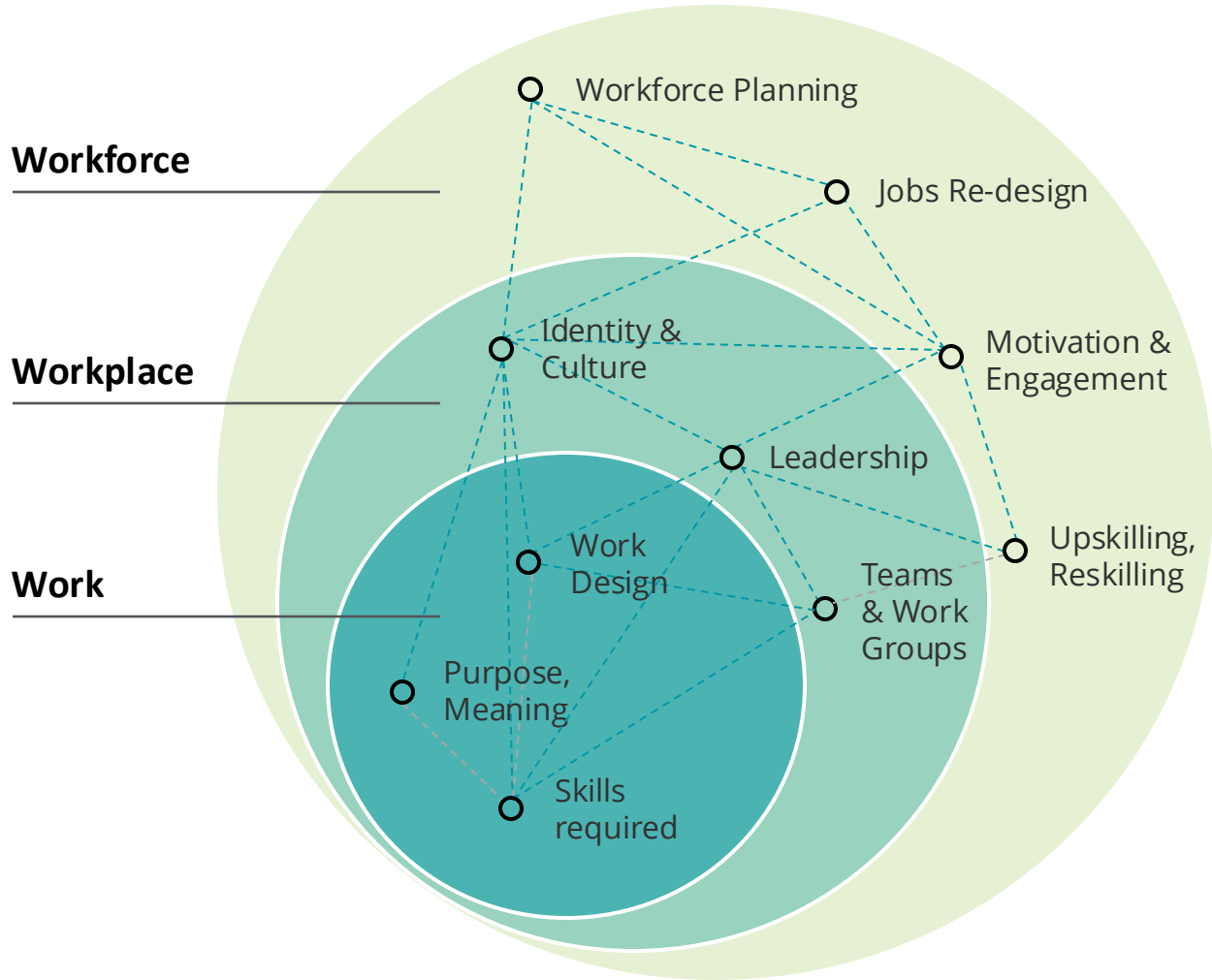
- Employee, Large tech company (2023)



"The management was aware that I was passively searching and put their heart into the referral letter, noting down all of my achievements."

- Anonymous (2024)

What organizations can do to embark on a journey to understand about continuously synchronize work, the workplace, and the workforce.



Workforce: Enabling organizations to make positive change and helping leaders understand the importance of ensuring that their workforce is scalable for the future, motivated, engagement, equipped with the right skills to respond to market.



Workplace: Workplace culture influences everything we do at work. Research by Deloitte¹ shows 94% of executives and 88% of employees believe a distinct corporate culture is important to business success.



Work: Finding meaning and purpose in your work to stay motivated and productive, designing your work life to thrive and find happiness at work, building a long-term career based on acquiring multi-disciplinary skills.

Sources: ¹ Deloitte



It is impossible to survive as a company if one is not sensitive to its people.

“Business is not only about making money. One **has to do everything right and ethically for customers & stakeholders.**”

Sir Ratan Tata



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Thank you.





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