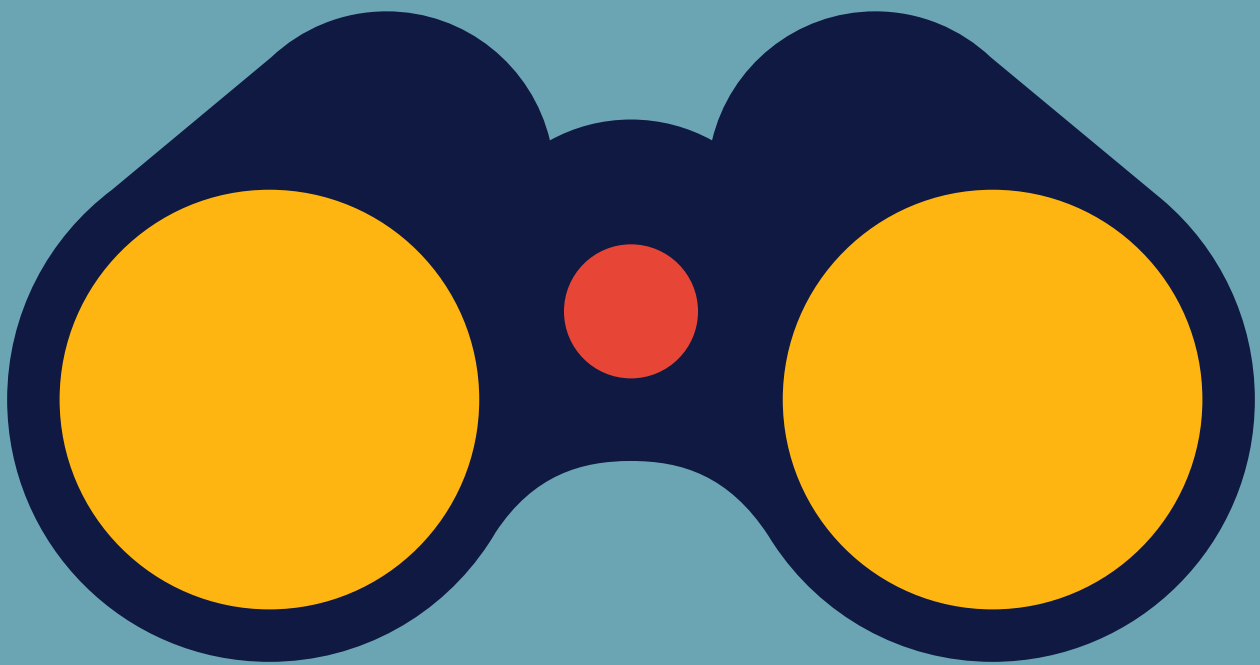


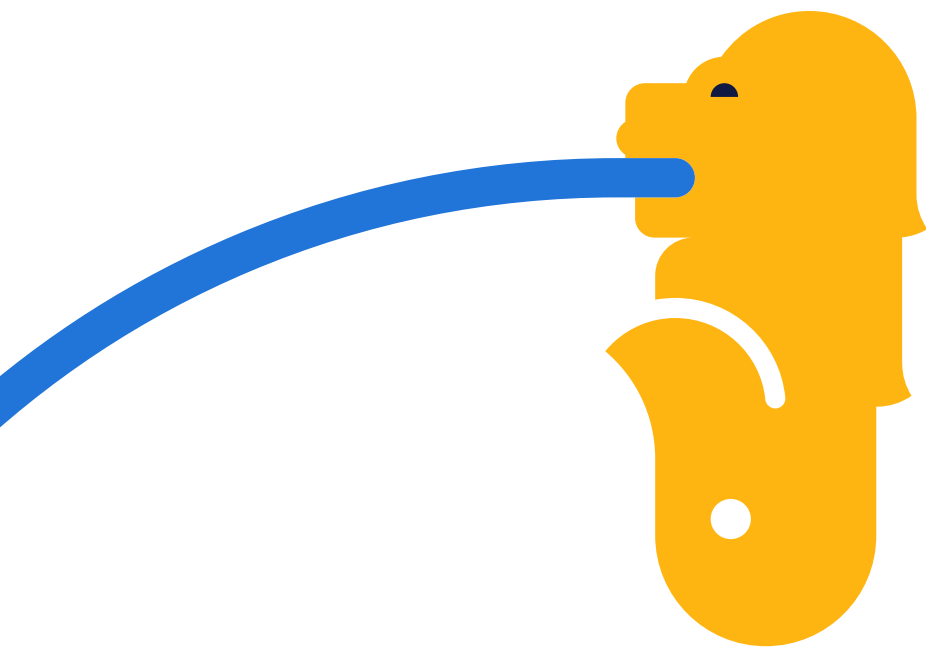
# market outlook & salary snapshot 2021.

singapore.



# specialisations

## we'll cover.



1

2021 singapore market outlook.

2

information technology.

3

biomanufacturing & chemicals.

4

consumer (sales & marketing).

# 2021 singapore market outlook.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry has [forecasted](#) 2021 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow by between 4% and 6%, which will be driven by the pickup in external demand as well as growth in the information & communications and finance & insurance sectors. Singapore's economy has recovered steadily following the end of Circuit Breaker and as of writing; the 2020 GDP forecast for 2020 has been narrowed to -6.5% to -6%.

In response to the COVID-19 healthcare crisis, the Singapore government has pledged approximately S\$100 billion [across five Budgets](#). Due to the government's efforts, local companies and job seekers have access to financial and job search support through the National Jobs Council, Job Support Scheme, SGUnited Traineeship Programme and more. By August 2020, [more than S\\$16 billion](#) of the allocated S\$23.5 billion Job Support Scheme has been disbursed, benefiting more than two million local workers in more than 150,000 companies.

It should be noted that such levels of financial support are unprecedented and not sustainable in the long run. Businesses must be agile to remain resilient in 2021. Digitalisation and automation will continue to drive growth in 2021 as companies further develop their digital capabilities to adapt to this challenging business climate.

Some larger firms have set aside budgets to invest in innovative technologies such as R&D and robotics automation processes to streamline operations, increase productivity and drive long-term cost savings. Small-and-medium enterprises have also been seen to be leveraging government grants to diversify and digitalise their businesses to stay competitive.



As organisations strengthen their capabilities to capitalise on the growing digital economy, the talent demand for technologists and digitally-adept professionals will increase exponentially in 2021.

### 2021 talent forecast

The fear of uncertainty due to the virus outbreak has very much dictated the climate in 2020, and businesses are likely to remain cautiously optimistic in 2021, depending on the rate of market recovery. We expect most firms in Singapore to further tighten their budgets and re-allocate their resources accordingly, with the majority going to digital initiatives. These areas of focus will also be where we would see more hiring activities.

Companies in industries that are driven by growth and consumption, like banking and financial services, e-commerce, healthcare, logistics and technology are likely to remain robust, with some even looking to expand. The growth in these industries is largely driven by the increasing use of digital technology by both businesses and consumers.

However, companies in industries such as aviation, hospitality, tourism and construction are expected to undergo further business restructuring in the near future. They should remain conservative when it comes to hiring, and will likely re-engineer some roles within the organisation to meet new or additional demands.

In our 2021 edition of the Singapore Market Outlook, which looks into talent recruitment trends and forecast of in-demand jobs, we will dive into three areas where we expect to see growth - information & communication technology, biomanufacturing & chemicals as well as consumer (sales & marketing).

## the recruitment industry and the “new normal”

According to [LinkedIn’s 2020 Labour Market Update](#) released in August 2020, the approximate hiring rate was at -5% Y-O-Y.

Many employers will remain vigilant with regards to their talent management strategy in 2021, with more focussing on balancing cost management and growth expectations. We may see more firms needing to implement cost-cutting measures if the recovery rate of the global economy is not quick enough, possibly caused by new waves of COVID-19 infections and lockdowns.

Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam had urged companies to [bring forward their hiring plans](#) so that businesses can emerge from COVID-19 in a better state. Both the pandemic and political climates will continue to pose challenges, and create shorter economic cycles that will influence business operations and strategies. Employers will need to be sure that they have the talent to harness the strength of the recovering market and deploy the right resources to meet optimal targets.

The ratio of job seekers to jobs in the market is likely to remain above 1 next year or at least until businesses are able to resume at least 90% of their operations, which is when we will see the supply and demand gap close quickly.

With a larger pool of candidates to pick from, companies need to ensure that their recruitment efforts are effective and highly targeted so that they can secure the best talent in the market. This would include ensuring a positive [candidate](#) and [employee](#) experience.

Employers need to build their online brand presence to engage with job seekers and ensure that they are technologically-able to digitally screen candidates, conduct video interviews and administer virtual assessment tests remotely.

There has also been a big shift towards work-life integration in 2020. The [Randstad Singapore Employer Brand Research](#) has indicated a growing demand for flexible working options, especially among the [younger generations](#) who highly value work-life balance and personal development outside of work.

Employers should take 2020 as a lesson to improve their flexible work policies and offer remote and flexible working post-pandemic to meet increasing employee expectations and drive business productivity. Employers would also need to redefine their rules of engagement and outline new responsibilities or competencies their employees require to effectively adopt the hybrid workforce model.

The widening skills gap in Singapore remains a critical issue that needs to be addressed quickly and efficiently. There is an urgent need for the public and private sectors to work together, to determine the current and future skills and knowledge gaps, and redesign programmes that will allow students and re-skilled talent to be readily deployed to work.

When making decisions about their careers, workers in Singapore are focusing on [job security](#), long-term growth opportunities and the financial stability of a company. Firms will need to adapt and learn how to engage their candidates and be able to align their long-term career goals with the organisation’s growth plans.





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## increasing demand for professional contracting talent

Regardless of the pandemic, more and more employers are exploring the benefits of professional contracting as a cost-effective and alternative talent solution to build and retain high human capital in their workforce.

As companies face an increasingly rapid pace of change and innovation, it inadvertently leads to the restructuring and re-engineering of business functions. Having a more flexible workforce that is more project and outcome-based, rather than function-based, is critical to ensuring sustained productivity and competitiveness.

Due to the lack of jobs in the market, local workers are becoming more open to accepting contract roles and are gradually gaining a newfound appreciation for its flexible and agile nature. Project or term-based contracting roles give employees the exposure they need to grow their portfolio, deepen their capabilities and grow their network.

## every crisis presents an opportunity

With change and innovation as a constant, companies must stay agile and find new pockets of growth in 2021. Business leaders who saw this crisis as an opportunity for change and a chance to depart from old ways that are no longer relevant in the 'new normal', will be able to experience new growth. On the other hand, companies that are neither agile nor courageous enough to embrace change will find it increasingly difficult to survive in this climate.

To end this note, I would like to thank all our clients, candidates and partners for trusting us during such unprecedented times. As a global talent recruitment agency with a strong local market focus, it is important for us to start putting people to work so that we can achieve recovery and growth together.

We remain rooted in our goal – to touch the work lives of 500 million people worldwide by 2030, and we can only achieve that when we come together.



daljit sall  
senior director  
information technology  
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# information technology.



“There is an ongoing and severe shortage of technologists across the world. Border control measures have only made it more challenging for companies to attract these highly sought-after candidates,” said Daljit Sall, Senior Director of Information Technology recruitment at Randstad Singapore.

The rapid adoption and advancement of technology have accelerated the growth of the technology industry, particularly in cybersecurity, payments, deep tech, data science, e-commerce and Service-as-a-Solution (SaaS). Microsoft estimates that there will be [149 million new technology-oriented jobs](#) globally by 2025 across privacy and trust, cybersecurity, data analytics, cloud and software development.

Business-to-consumer companies in non-tech space such as retail, banking and food & beverage are pivoting their business models from offline to online. As more companies invest in new technologies to capture online purchases, it has resulted in a resounding growth in digital wallets, payment processors and e-commerce platforms.

Bain & Company [reported](#) that even as transport and travel have declined, e-commerce, online media and food delivery have surged. The internet industry will remain resilient at US\$100 billion gross merchandise value by the end of 2020, and is poised to grow to more than US\$300 billion GMV by 2025 - a forecast that remains unchanged despite COVID-19.

Manufacturers and supply chain industries are also starting to invest more in technology to speed up logistics, not just for products and goods, but also essentials such as the manufacturing of medical supplies for COVID-19. Financial services firms, which have made great progress in digital banking in 2020, are also exploring deeper into blockchain technology and decentralised financing.

The investments and growth in technology will drive further talent demand in Singapore, a highly ambitious country where there is already a scarcity of tech talent.

## talent and skills demand in 2021

In 2021, there will be a heightened demand for developers (software developers, engineers, mobile, UX/UI), digital transformation, data scientists, cloud architects and cybersecurity experts.

A majority of the talent demand is driven by small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) that need to develop their technical competency and sophistication. Software engineers who have worked in big tech companies are highly sought-after by SMEs due to their technical expertise, industry exposure and experience.

On the other hand, multinational companies (MNCs) would already have a mature technology team to provide support or have engaged agencies to help maintain their systems. MNCs are also more likely to hire digital transformation experts to drive innovation and further push the boundaries of technology.

The rapid adoption of cloud services has created a '[cloud skills crisis](#)', where there is a spike in talent demand for cloud architects who are ahead of their times. Companies are urgently hiring experienced cloud architects who have managed big transformation projects and can look at the big picture.

And underlining all tech products and solutions is the essential need for a strong cybersecurity system. As businesses increase their digital footprint, the responsibility to protect corporate, employee and customer data will be the organisation's to bear. We anticipate that this will drive the demand for experts in cybersecurity, specifically in cloud security, risk management, threat intelligence, governance as well as data privacy and security.

## slow but promising progress in tech talent development

The global demand for tech talent far exceeds the supply, and the small talent pool is slowing down our ambition in technology advancements. These technology professionals are not only actively sought-after by MNCs to drive innovations, but also by SMEs and start-ups to increase their competitiveness and level the playing field.

### 1. expanding the talent pool

Countries around the world have shifted their focus to safeguard their economy, which includes their human capital. We've seen unprecedented support from governments and companies, such as targeted upskilling and traineeship programmes, to ensure the employment and ongoing development of the local workforce.

Even though there are more active job seekers in the market, the reality is that a majority of them are not equipped with the technical skills that employers need. Companies also face greater challenges bringing highly-qualified talent from abroad due to border and visa controls.

Singaporeans and permanent residents are the focus now, and good candidates often receive multiple job offers. This talent shortage has not only driven up salary expectations but also created further delays in the hiring process.

To counter this, Sall advises employers to budget more time and money for each hire, "Instead of setting a fixed time and budget to hire, be flexible with it. Companies should also plan their talent recruitment strategy ahead of time rather than react to market developments. Candidates tend to engage with companies that contacted them first, so employers that engage with their talent early on will have a lead when hiring."

The [Tech.Pass](#) visa, which opens for applications in 2021, will ideally create an avenue for the movers and shakers of tech to work in Singapore to 'perform frontier and disruptive innovations'.

"The criteria may seem a little high, but being able to attract and secure top tech talent is the priority, especially senior tech professionals in roles such as Head of Engineering. It shows global stakeholders that Singapore is committed to our position as the region's technology hub. A highly qualified and bigger talent pool will also attract even more tech firms and investments in the future," said Sall.

Companies can also explore the benefits that a cloud workforce may offer to address talent shortage issues. A cloud workforce would mean that employers can hire foreign talent without having to relocate them to Singapore. This would help companies stay agile and retain a strong and qualified human capital to drive business operations.

While having a cloud workforce also gives local talent the opportunity to work with companies anywhere around the world, Sall warns that locally-based companies may end up reducing the number of local workers. A full cloud workforce may not work for all companies and is not sustainable in the long-term, as it is difficult to replicate the energy of a dynamic office culture.

Instead, a hybrid model which embodies cloud working for certain roles or departments, such as software engineers, may help companies address some of their skills gap in the long run.



## 2. developing local talent

Regardless of the stopgap measures to address skills shortage, upskilling is non-negotiable in workforce development. It will take time for people to be trained and be ready to take on senior tech positions.

Educational institutions are increasingly working with the government and private enterprises to develop robust curriculums that will equip the younger generations with future in-demand tech skills. There are also increasing collaborations with commercial organisations through start-up accelerator programmes, hackathons, as well as e-learning and networking platforms.

However, the industry can do a lot more to expose young students and working professionals to technology in a way that better prepares them for work, which would include the teaching of theories and concepts, as well as a variety of hands-on exposure in real-life settings.

It is also critical for employers to understand the underlying motivations that are driving mid-career seekers to join the tech industry. The relationship and transparency between the employer and employee will be significant in the development of tech talent. Without proper career guidance and skills development, the training programmes would be immaterial as some of these high potential employees may return to their old careers where they feel more comfortable.

## more technologists may switch employers in 2021

The hiring market is expected to be more active in 2021, as more technologists will be looking for new opportunities and exposure to build upon their existing skills and become better at what they do. Employees will also be more motivated to switch employers if they do not feel that they have made any progress in their existing role.

On average and across the board, the salary increment for tech talent looking to switch employers ranges between 8% and 12%. Due to the scarcity and strong demand for tech talent, local tech professionals may receive a 20% to 30% salary increment when they switch employers in 2021.

However, Sall urges employers and candidates to have a realistic view of their salaries in 2021. If salary expectations are not aligned with the current economic environment, candidates may risk pricing themselves out of potential roles and employers may be in peril of entering expensive employment contracts.

Paper qualifications should not determine the salary benchmark. “Just because the candidate is a software engineer with a certain degree, doesn’t mean that they are worth a certain amount of salary. Their skills, experience, potential and contribution to your business should matter more when determining their salary,” said Sall.

# salary snapshot.

roles	experience	low	medium	high
CTO	10-15	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$25,000
Head of Engineering	8-12	\$12,000	\$17,000	\$22,000
Development Director	8-12	\$12,000	\$17,000	\$22,000
Programme Manager	8-12	\$10,000	\$14,000	\$18,000
Project Manager	7-10	\$8,000	\$11,000	\$15,000
Data Scientist	2-5	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$15,000
Java Developer	1-4	\$3,500	\$4,500	\$5,500
	5-10	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$9,000
	10-15	\$7,000	\$9,000	\$12,000
.NET Developer	1-4	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000
	5-10	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$8,000
	10-15	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$10,000
Machine Learning Engineer	1-4	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000
	5-10	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$12,000
UI/UX Designer	1-4	\$3,500	\$5,500	\$6,500
	5-10	\$5,500	\$7,500	\$11,000
	10-15	\$7,000	\$9,000	\$12,000
Product Manager	1-4	\$4,000	\$5,500	\$7,500
	5-10	\$6,500	\$8,500	\$11,000
	10-15	\$7,000	\$9,000	\$12,000
Mobile Developer	1-4	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$5,500
	5-10	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$9,000
	10-15	\$7,000	\$9,000	\$12,000

# salary snapshot.

roles	experience	low	medium	high
QA Engineer	1-4	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$6,000
	5-10	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$9,000
	10-15	\$6,500	\$8,000	\$12,000
DevOps Engineer	1-4	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000
	5-10	\$6,000	\$9,000	\$12,000
	10-15	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$13,000
Pre-Sales Solutions Architect	5-10	\$8,000	\$13,000	\$18,000
Solution Architect	1-4	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
	5-10	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$9,000
	10-15	\$10,000	\$13,000	\$15,000
Desktop Engineer (IT Support)	1-4	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000
	5-10	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000
	10-15	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$6,000
Data Engineer	1-4	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$6,000
	5-10	\$6,500	\$8,000	\$10,000
	10-15	\$10,500	\$12,000	\$15,000
Infrastructure Engineer (Systems)	1-4	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$4,500
	5-10	\$4,500	\$5,500	\$6,500
	10-15	\$6,500	\$7,500	\$8,500

# salary snapshot.

roles	experience	low	medium	high
Network Engineer	1-4	\$3,500	\$4,500	\$5,500
	5-10	\$4,500	\$5,500	\$6,500
	10-15	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$8,000
IT Manager	1-4	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$8,000
	5-10	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$9,000
	10-15	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$14,000
IT Security Engineer / Cyber Security Analyst	1-4	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
	5-10	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$10,000
	10-15	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$12,000
NOC / Data Centre Operator	1-4	\$2,800	\$3,200	\$3,500
	5-10	\$4,000	\$4,500	\$5,500
	10-15	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
IT Infrastructure PM	1-4	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$6,000
	5-10	\$6,000	\$6,500	\$7,000
	10-15	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$9,000
IT Security Manager	1-4	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$10,000
	5-10	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$13,000
	10-15	\$12,000	\$13,000	\$15,000

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



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# biomanufacturing & chemicals.

In general, the operating volume and hiring activities in the biomanufacturing and chemicals sectors are expected to resume fully after Q2 2021, if the COVID-19 situation does not worsen.

According to the Ministry of Manpower's Weekly Job Situation Report on 9 November, there are about [6,370 jobs on offer in the manufacturing sector](#), double the 3,200 openings reported in August 2020. Of the jobs available reported in November, seven in 10 are for professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs).

The Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) has set a target for the sector to contribute 30% of Singapore's overall gross domestic product by 2030. The diversification of the manufacturing sector to keep the economy open will help meet this goal. Over the past few years, we have not only seen traditional manufacturing transform itself to achieve operational and cost efficiencies, but also the rapid entry of high potential verticals such as agritech and green energy.

Global talent and resource mobilisation are keys to facilitate trade supply and demand, which would determine the industry's ability to expand. Within the manufacturing sector, the biomanufacturing and chemicals verticals were seen to be bolstering the growth in 2020, albeit at a slower rate due to COVID-19.

While firms in petrochemicals and specialty chemicals have put their expansion plans on hold in response to the global healthcare crisis, production outputs have remained stable. Employers are mostly only hiring replacement headcount to ensure their ability to deliver on the orders.

On the other hand, biomanufacturing firms that focus on producing essential products and medicines have reportedly expanded their production output to meet global demands. Employees are working in split teams with longer hours per shift to fulfil orders and meet critical deadlines.



## 2021 workforce trends in biomanufacturing & chemicals

Singapore is a small country with limited resources, hence it is critical that the government and companies remain prudent in their investments and spending, and stay agile to meet new challenges.

Some of the most impacted companies within biomanufacturing and chemicals had reported downsizing their workforce since Q3 of 2020. This trend may continue until Q2 of 2021 if organisations in Singapore and other countries are not able to resume full operations. Senior-level executives will be more affected by business restructuring due to their high salaries and compensation packages. Companies that have more than a 30% reduction in revenue as a result of the muted global supply and demand will likely freeze or reduce their headcount.

Despite these challenges, the new developments in vaccines have boosted business confidence. Companies are eager to resume full business operations and will be hiring talent to meet anticipated demands.

However, the revitalisation of the workforce is not the only challenge that organisations will face. The workforce will also have to keep pace with the transformation, and companies are uncovering deep issues in their existing talent pool's knowledge gap and skills readiness.

### 1. limited talent pool is driving up candidate expectations

Biomanufacturing and chemicals are two critical verticals in the manufacturing industry. There are plenty of job opportunities for local talent to venture into, where they have the opportunity to gain global exposure and be at the forefront of innovative manufacturing technology.

Kwan Yit Wei, Associate Director for Construction, Engineering and Property talent recruitment at Randstad Singapore said, "Thousands of students graduate from the schools of engineering and sciences every year, which means there should be many more candidates in the labour market. However, what we often see is that many graduates would rather join other industries such as financial services, sales and marketing and technology, where they get to work in roles that fulfil their real passion or the opportunity to be closer to the 'buzz' in the CBD. Only a fraction of the people who are qualified for these technical roles remains in manufacturing, which essentially means that employers have access to a very small group of qualified local talent."

With the limited local talent pool where employers are struggling to find the right candidates, job seekers in the manufacturing industry have raised their expectations.

Local candidates who have in-demand skills and experience are able to negotiate for a salary that may even be higher than pre-COVID times. Before the pandemic, candidates received 8% to 12% salary increments when switching employers. In 2021, local in-demand talent may negotiate for more than a 12% salary increment when they are looking to move.





## 2. widening skill gaps

A survey conducted by SMF said that three-quarters of the respondents are still hiring talent amidst COVID-19 as their workforce lacks technically-equipped candidates.

Kwan concurs, “Many employers, especially in chemicals, are looking for specialists who are equipped with niche skills for roles in production engineering, research & development, design engineering and lean manufacturing. These candidates are usually based overseas, and there are very few Singaporeans who are willing to do it due to the high job requirements and grimy environment that they have to work in.”

However, the silver lining of the current labour market is that there are more talent seeking avenues and opportunities to upskill and re-skill. The [2020 1H Randstad Workmonitor](#) survey revealed that 89% of respondents are willing to be retrained to ensure their long-term employability.

More than 13,000 people signed up for training under the SGUnited Skills Programme between July and August in 2020. The SGUnited Mid-Career Pathways Programme has also boosted the manufacturing industry, with 500 training places offered by leading companies that are spearheading Industry 4.0 technology.

Companies, particularly small-and-medium enterprises, are leveraging similar schemes and grants to build their human capital. Some local firms are tapping into government grants to hire mid-career switchers who have critical stakeholder management and business management skills. These highly-experienced PMETs, some skilled in STEM, are essential in propelling the business forward to stay competitive. Global companies will likely adopt a more laser-focused approach towards hiring, with some directing their efforts to only secure the highly-skilled individuals.

Apart from government support, companies should also enhance their internal training programmes to close the skills gap and strengthen their ability to attract good talent. The Randstad Workmonitor survey revealed that although 68% of respondents agree that their employers are committed to helping them grow professionally, 1 in 3 (64%) feel that current employer upskilling programmes are insufficient and do not adequately prepare them for the skills they need in the future.

Kwan said, “There have been quite a number of developments in the manufacturing sector over the past few years. With government support, SMEs are using digital technologies to drive efficiencies and compete against the big players in the market. It is critical that employers provide skills development programmes that are targeted at helping each of their employees deepen their competencies in their own field of expertise, as well as a detailed roadmap of their career progression with the company.”

Private-public partnerships between companies and educational institutions can also help nurture young talent through early job exposure to ensure that they stay on track in pursuing a career in manufacturing.

## candidates’ job searching behaviour in 2021

Candidates are looking to join employers that are financially healthy and have a strong organisational culture. These factors usually signal that the company can provide greater income stability and the opportunity to grow in a collaborative and supportive environment. Business closure or retrenchments announcements, be it in Singapore or other countries, can unfortunately affect a firm’s ability to retain and attract talent.

There is a very closely-knitted network of professionals working in these verticals, particularly in chemicals. Companies should try their best to meet employees’ and candidates’ expectations to strengthen their employer brand value, as these professionals are likely to share their experience with your organisation with other candidates in the same space. In this digitally-connected age, word-of-mouth can travel really fast and have a significant impact on your company’s reputation, which in turn will influence your ability to attract the best talent.

# salary snapshot.

roles	experience	low	medium	high
Head of Production / Manufacturing	10-14	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$14,000
EHS Manager	8-10	\$7,000	\$9,000	\$12,000
Quality Manager	8-10	\$7,500	\$9,500	\$11,000
Manufacturing Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
E&I Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Quality Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Mechanical Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Electrical Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Quality Director / Head	10-14	\$9,000	\$11,000	\$14,000
System Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Customer Service Engineer	3-5	\$3,300	\$4,500	\$7,500
Customer Service Manager	5-8	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
Process Engineer	3-5	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Production / Shift Supervisor	6-4	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$4,500
Techician	2-1	\$1,600	\$1,800	\$2,400

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



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# consumer (sales & marketing).

## The consumer's purchasing behaviour took a sharp turn in 2020.

A recent Bain & Company's [report](#) said that the global healthcare crisis has brought about a permanent and massive surge in the adoption of digital services in Southeast Asia. 36% of total digital services consumers are new to the service, of which 90% intend to continue their online habits after the pandemic.

Singapore is home to e-commerce and consumer tech unicorns such as Lazada, Sea group and Grab. Its highly-connected network, strong tech infrastructure and sound business and government policies continue to fuel its long-term growth in the consumer space.

As more and more traditional retail and consumer brands pivot their business, consumer tech firms are seen to be onboarding more merchants on their platforms. This would further contribute to the construction of a more robust and diverse ecosystem as the market matures.

We predict that the consumer tech scene will continue its rapid growth in 2021, as investments pour into building Southeast Asia's digital economy.

David Blasco, senior director of sales and marketing recruitment at Randstad Singapore said, "The evolution of the consumer space will drive the hiring of digitally-adept sales & marketing professionals. Instead of traditional skills such as e-mail marketing or above-the-line advertising, employers are drawn to candidates who are skilled in account management, e-commerce as well as 360 digital and social media marketing."

Middle-level professionals who are experienced in both traditional and digital sales & marketing are also highly sought after. These hybrid professionals bring with them the highly-valued experience of not just managing an effective transition towards digital, but also developing the perfect blend between traditional and digital marketing channels that works for their industry.

"Companies, particularly small-and-medium enterprises, also require their sales & marketing professionals to keep pace with new schemes and grants from the government and industry. Employees need to take a proactive approach towards understanding these schemes and grants, and work with their stakeholders to develop the firm's and their own digital capabilities," adds Blasco.

# hiring trends for 2021: consumer industry

We expect to see a slight increase in talent recruitment within the consumer industry throughout 2021. However, it will remain a candidate-driven industry even as more job opportunities become available.

## 1. in-demand: regional sales & marketing experts with niche skills

Singapore remains the regional headquarters for many consumer brands, where regional sales & marketing campaigns, client acquisition and account management are usually managed out of Singapore for Southeast Asia markets. Employers will be focusing their hiring efforts for talent with regional (Southeast Asia/Asia Pacific) exposure in digital marketing, e-commerce, data analytics as well as account and stakeholder management. Organisations are also looking for seasoned corporate communications and public relations professionals to protect, promote and advance the company's customer offerings and corporate reputation.

In terms of soft skills, candidates who demonstrate agility are proactive and possess strong stakeholder management and communication skills will be highly sought-after.

Employers are facing greater competition and challenges in hiring the right in-house marketing professionals due to the higher expectations on digital marketing, which is a relatively niche and complex area. Some of the in-demand roles in this space span across marketing analytics, demand generation, marketing automation, programmatic marketing, performance marketing and inbound marketing.

These in-demand candidates tend to have an in-depth knowledge of the industry and possess more strategic in-house experience. While marketing professionals from the agency space are also equipped with such niche skills, the organisation culture differences between in-house and agency would complicate the talent acquisition and integration process.

## 2. traditional sales & marketing roles will evolve to have more digital responsibilities

With many countries experiencing new COVID-19 waves, it is highly unlikely that companies can return to hosting thousand-attendee conferences and events in 2021. Border control measures have also made it extremely difficult for companies to fly in spokespeople for events in Singapore. As such, demand for traditional sales & marketing skills in event management will evolve to become more digitally-driven to facilitate satellite events.

Traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) functions will also see some level of digitalisation and automation. Employees who manage face-to-face customer services will be upskilled and re-deployed to digital CRM teams, where they will be required to use technology to develop and design automated conversation workflows.

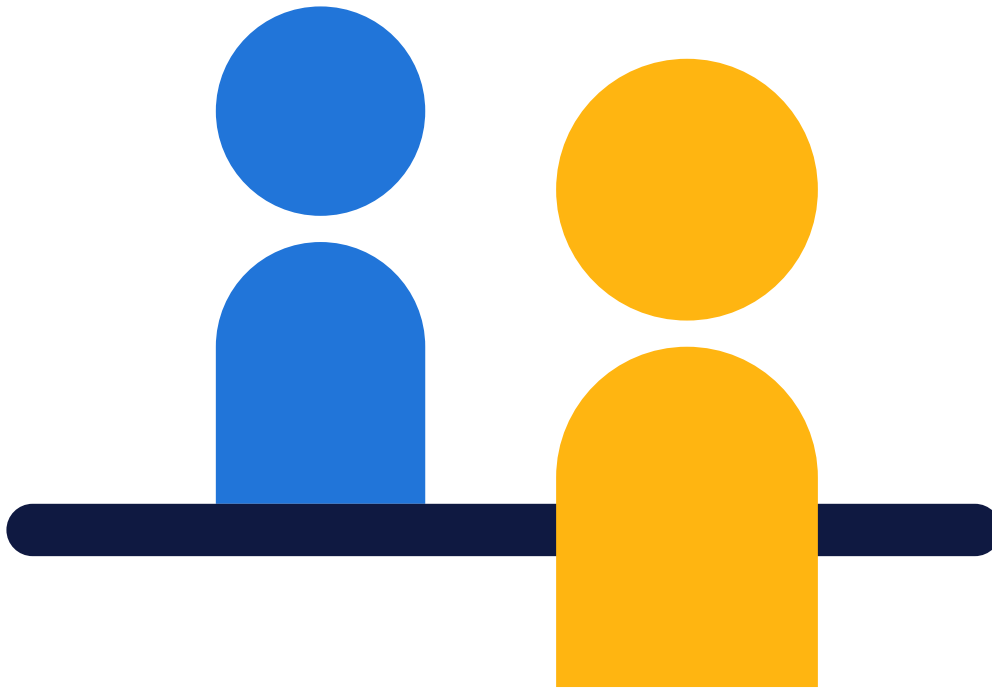
## provide skills development in digital to attract and retain talent

Even though there is an increasing number of firms' wanting to provide customer-centric digital solutions to their customers, employers are facing challenges with the widening skills gap, especially in digital-led positions. As a result, these employers tend to have higher expectations when searching for their ideal candidates. Many companies ended up prolonging the interview process, which may lead to them losing out on good talent.

Sales & marketing professionals are also eager and motivated to deepen their digital competencies. In the [Randstad Singapore's Workmonitor 1H 2020 survey](#), 68% of respondents agree that their employers are committed to helping them grow professionally, but 64% do not feel that employer's upskilling programmes are sufficient enough to prepare them for the skills they need in the future.

Firms that want to retain their talent will need to have a renewed and sharper focus on investing in technology as well as develop their workforce capabilities in digital. If organisations do not change their workforce development game plan as they do their business strategies, they may risk losing their employees to other firms that offer better exposure and upskilling opportunities in digital.





### shifting perception towards contract roles

There is a positive mindset shift from both employers and candidates towards professional contracting.

Companies are starting to move towards an integrated workforce model, where both permanent and contract employees work together on sales & marketing campaigns. The number of contracting roles has doubled to 20%, as compared to before COVID-19. The shift is also largely driven by western global companies, which has proved that professional contractors can contribute to long-term productivity and human capital development. Over time, we can expect more small-and-medium enterprises to jump on the bandwagon and start to build a more integrated and flexible workforce.

Companies can facilitate knowledge transfer between their employees and contractors through work collaboration to further develop their workforce capabilities.

Blasco explains, "When companies onboard an expert who specialises in marketing automation, they don't work alone to build and implement the whole process. They have to speak with the team to understand the existing digital marketing capabilities and software support and make recommendations to the stakeholders on which solutions to buy or subscribe to. These specialists will also need to educate the existing team of how the new systems and processes will impact their work responsibilities, such as how to flag and manage human reviews. Through these exercises, the existing team will have the opportunity to learn from an expert and further develop their digital marketing skills."

### candidates will switch jobs for more and better exposure

We expect more people to look for new employment opportunities in 2021. The consumer FMCG industry has always been an active space for recruitment as candidates are more independent when it comes to their own career and professional development.

People tend to look for new opportunities when they crave more career advancement opportunities or if they want to work in a different organisational culture. Blasco said, "Sales & marketing professionals who want to acquire new skills often switch employers or join an agency to gain the exposure and experience they want as part of their career development. Having relevant and adequate working experience across multiple functional areas and industries can also help them become more employable in this climate, as it demonstrates their agility and adaptability."

The marketing consultancy and advertising industries are also known for their long working hours as their employees are often required to juggle multiple projects and meet tight deadlines. However, there is now a greater emphasis on work-life balance, particularly among [Gen-Z workers](#). Employers that offer flexible work and autonomy to employees to manage their own projects and teams can boost their ability to attract good talent.

Candidates who switch employers and take on a more senior job title within the same industry can expect to receive a 10% to 15% salary increment. Those who make a parallel switch across industries may receive an approximately 5% salary increase.

# salary snapshot.

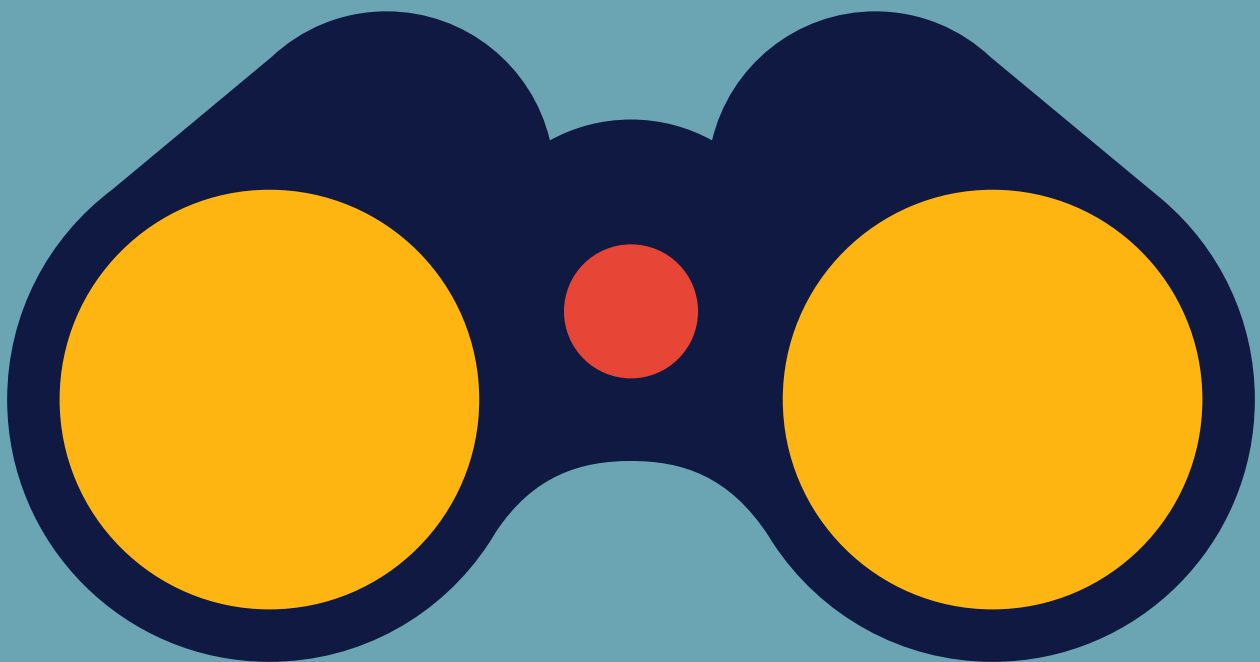
roles	experience	low	medium	high
Local General Manager	10-15	\$13,000	\$16,000	\$22,000
Regional VP, Sales & Marketing	8-15	\$10,000	\$13,000	\$16,000
Regional Sales Director	10-15	\$12,000	\$13,000	\$17,000
Regional Sales Manager	8-10	\$7,500	\$9,500	\$11,000
Local Sales Director / Manager	8-12	\$7,000	\$9,000	\$11,000
E-Commerce Director	6-8	\$8,500	\$10,000	\$11,500
E-Commerce Manager	4-6	\$5,000	\$6,500	\$8,500
Digital Marketing Director	8-10	\$10,000	\$11,500	\$12,500
Digital Marketing Manager	6-8	\$7,500	\$8,500	\$10,000
Regional Marketing Manager	8-10	\$7,500	\$9,000	\$11,000
Local Marketing Director	10-15	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$14,000
Local Marketing Manager	6-8	\$6,500	\$7,500	\$9,000
Marketing Communications Manager	6-8	\$7,000	\$8,500	\$10,000
Regional PR & Events Manager	6-8	\$5,500	\$7,000	\$8,500
Regional Visual Merchandising Manager	7-10	\$5,500	\$7,000	\$8,500
Regional Training Manager	7-10	\$6,500	\$8,000	\$9,500

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

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Randstad is one of the world's largest recruitment and HR services providers. With operations located across Hong Kong SAR, China, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Randstad Malaysia specialises in both permanent and contract recruitment and help organisations across industries find the best talent in accounting & finance, banking & financial services, construction, property & engineering, human resources and business support, information technology, sales, marketing & communications, as well as supply chain & procurement.

Human connection is at the heart of our business. Our personal approach, supported by state-of-the-art technology, is what sets us apart in the world of work. We express this with our brand promise: Human Forward.



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