

Asia-Pacific report

The Future of Recruiting

How COVID-19 is transforming recruiting

LinkedIn Talent Solutions



Introduction

Before COVID-19, there were already significant changes in how recruiters did their jobs. The rise of analytical tools, an increasing focus on diversity, and the shift in skills organisations were looking for meant that the role of the recruiter was fast evolving.

Then as Asia-Pacific responded to the crisis, we saw organisations make digital transformations that would have typically taken months, if not years, implemented by talent professionals within days and weeks. Talent professionals have met these challenges, done more with less, and helped recalibrate plans for the future amid the uncertainty.

Now we're all wondering, what comes next? We've outlined six predictions about the future of recruiting in Asia-Pacific — based on input from hundreds of your peers, billions of data points from the LinkedIn platform, and interviews with talent leaders from the region and around the world.

While the region has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to internal mobility, the depth of your existing talent pool is set to become even more important. Asia-Pacific is also embracing diversity, and you'll be on the frontline of delivering on organisational efforts towards greater inclusion and belonging. Recruiters have always been in the business of making connections quickly, but now you'll make virtual connections feel as real as an on-site handshake. You'll unlock the potential of a remote workforce, while demonstrating the best of your company's employer brand. All of these new demands on your time will see you continue to add new skills, foster new relationships and cement the role of recruiting as a cornerstone of your organisation.

Read on to see how you'll reshape the future of recruiting.



Prediction 1

Recruiting will hire less, build and borrow more.

No longer a nice-to-have, internal mobility will be a must-have. Prior to COVID-19, many Asia-Pacific organisations were already tapping into their existing talent pool, but now internal mobility will become an essential part of any hiring strategy.

Recruiters can unlock the full potential of internal talent in partnership with learning and development (L&D) and broader HR. Leading a rigorous internal mobility program rather than leaving it to hiring managers or ad hoc practices will set your organisation apart from the others.

The additional benefit of internal mobility programs is that it boosts retention and increases engagement. LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends report found employees are likely to stay 41% longer at companies with high internal hiring.² Map out paths for talent to succeed, and deliver opportunities away from static jobs in siloed departments so that cross-functional teams can flourish. (Recruiters themselves experienced such a change in the immediate response to COVID-19, with many moving to new projects when hiring slowed.)

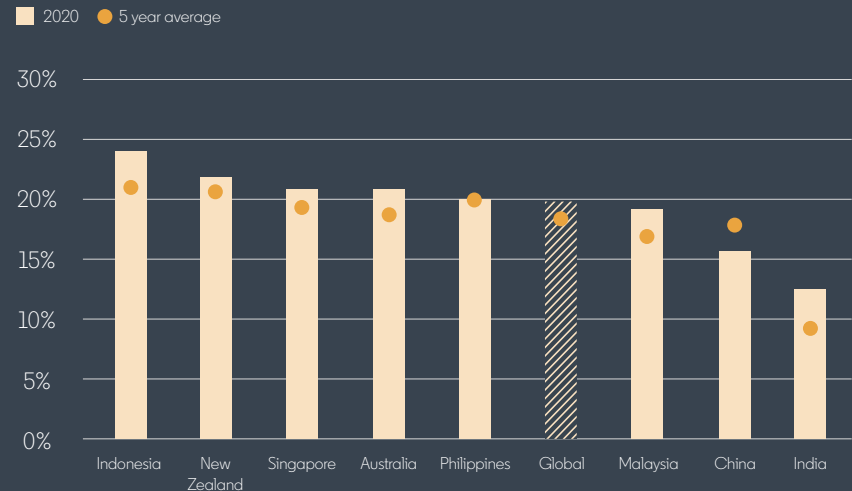
This will also change the way recruiters assess and hire talent. They'll prioritise applicants' potential and transferable skills, like adaptability and problem-solving, over their pedigree and technical capacity to do specific tasks.

15%

increase in internal mobility in Asia-Pacific since COVID-19.¹

2 out of 3 talent professionals in Asia-Pacific expect their L&D budget to **increase** or **stay the same**.

Internal mobility rates in Asia-Pacific



Internal mobility rate calculated as internal transitions made to dissimilar roles as a percentage of all transitions.

“The future of talent acquisition lies in reskilling, rather than finding someone better in the market. If you need to hire today, you need to reskill yesterday.”



Rajesh Ahuja

Global Head of Talent Acquisition
Infosys

Prediction 2

Recruiting will help keep the business accountable on diversity.

Globally, we've seen organisations find their voice, whether in support of the Black Lives Matter or reaching out and amplifying public health messages. But diversity, inclusion and belonging (DIBs) can't be treated as buzzwords, consumers and talent alike expect to see actions back up what is said.

Diversity is no longer a compliance measure, or a tick-box exercise but an integral part of any organisation's talent plan. But cultivating a culture of belonging, where people are empowered to express their ideas to unlock new solutions and innovation, doesn't happen overnight — which is why we're seeing a rise in the number of diversity, inclusion and belonging positions across Asia-Pacific.

For recruiters there's never been more access to new and diverse talent pools — as remote work and increased flexibility means underrepresented groups face fewer barriers. Meanwhile, more data-driven reporting against diversity goals will see greater accountability not just around more diverse hires, but that diverse talent is retained and is engaged.

73%

of Asia-Pacific talent professionals say diversity will be very important to the future of recruiting.

54%

of Asia-Pacific talent professionals say hiring managers are held accountable for interviewing diverse slate of candidates.



“We used our own performance data, to show that where you have more gender-balanced teams, where you also have teams that feel more included, teams are significantly safer, more productive in some areas of production, and definitely more engaged.”



Fiona Vines

Head of Inclusion & Diversity and Workforce Transition
BHP

Prediction 3

Virtual recruiting is here to stay.

For large countries, like Australia or India, the attraction of virtual recruiting that our COVID-19 era has ushered in is obvious. While it delivers access to new talent, as well as great savings in both time and costs, it also poses a new challenge for HR. How can you demonstrate your company brand, capture your workplace culture, and get that in-person feeling from someone through a computer screen?

It's all about embracing hybrid hiring, and finding the right mix of in-person and virtual to balance your recruiting needs. Going forward, our workplaces are likely to be hybrid between onsite and remote employees, so making sure talent can deliver in a hybrid hiring setting also takes on new value. Looking forward, we predict that organisations will need to perfect their virtual processes, to make the technology seamless and human as possible.

There will also need to be decisions about when virtual suits best, and when in-person is more appropriate. Candidates for entry-level positions may experience a completely virtual hiring process, not setting foot in the office until they're onboarded. Executive candidates, on the other hand, will continue to receive a more bespoke process with numerous onsite visits and face-to-face one-on-ones.

78% of Asia-Pacific's talent professionals agree virtual recruiting will continue post-COVID.



72% say virtual recruiting will become the new standard.



“Now that we’ve proven we can run our recruiting shop virtually, what does the new normal look like? We won’t go back to an environment where everything is fully in-person again because we don’t have to. It’s likely going to be a hybrid of in-person and virtual.”



Shavonne Gordon

Vice President of Enterprise Diversity Recruiting
Capital One

Prediction 4

Recruiters will lead the transition to remote work.

Globally, the volume of job searches using the “remote” filter has surged 60% since the start of March. In Asia-Pacific, we’ve seen Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines record strong growth in remote job postings.

Recruiters have traditionally been strong advisors to the business when it comes to workforce planning; now, with the demand for remote work, they are indispensable. Using data-driven insights and their expertise in getting the most out of talent, recruiters can drive their organisation’s sustainable transition to remote work.

While most organisations have been able to harness technology to make remote work work, it will be cultivating a strong workplace culture, regardless of distance that will give organisations the competitive edge. In our survey of Asia-Pacific talent professionals, it was interesting to note that the top challenges in light of COVID-19 had been creating a positive employee experience, and retaining a strong workplace culture. This outranked even creating new remote work packages or virtual onboarding. While remote work means fewer natural worksite social interactions, dedicating time to invest in employee wellbeing will make sure employees stay connected despite being remote.

Remote jobs result in over

20%

more geographical diversity among applicants.³

Advising the business on workplace planning is becoming increasingly important for

71%

of Asia-Pacific talent professionals.



“You think about cloud solutions — being able to tap into the cloud wherever you are. Why can’t we do that with talent? It does not matter where you sit or what country you’re in, as long as you have the skills. I think COVID-19 will be around for a while, unfortunately — but that’s an opportunity for recruiting to say that the door for talent is now open everywhere.”



Sharon Tan

Product Owner of Talent Mission
Next Gen People Practices
Telstra

Prediction 5

Your employer brand will hinge on empathy and actions.

Whether it was expressing gratitude for essential workers during the health crisis, or showing support for the Black Lives Matter movement — 2020 has been the year brands and organisations found their voice. Offering authentic reflections on the world around them has been well received.

In Asia-Pacific, we've recorded year-on-year growth of senior leaders taking the lead and initiating conversations about diversity. Empowering your own people to be ambassadors for your organisation is one of the most authentic ways to demonstrate your employer brand. A member's post will gain three times the traction than a company's. If they're proud of their employer, they can show that their company puts people first.

This hunger for honest and transparent communication will translate to hiring. Going forward, employer branding needs to focus less on slick marketing of office perks and shiny amenities, and more on how they support their communities, be it customers or employees, during times of crisis. Recruiters will also need to demonstrate their employer's brand in their interactions with candidates, through a focus on an empathetic and accommodating hiring process.

62% of Asia-Pacific talent professionals expect their employer branding budget to increase or stay the same.

When companies speak on current events, candidates engage more.

Engagement uplift on LinkedIn, compared to average engagement for company posts

Engagement on company posts about COVID-19 in April ⁴



Engagement on company posts about diversity in June ⁴



“We feel for the many people that have been displaced from stable employment through no fault of their own. Giving due consideration for each and every application and ensuring we’re providing a great candidate experience is really important to our Talent Experience teams globally, now so more than ever.”



James O'Reilly
Global Head of Talent
Xero

Prediction 6

Recruiters will build new skills to align with the business.

Considering the unpredictability and uncertainty of the macro environment, it's no surprise that the number one recruiter skill for the next year globally and in Asia-Pacific is adaptability.

There was also a distinct difference in how Asia-Pacific recruiters saw their roles evolving — 74% surveyed thought employee engagement would become a much bigger part of their role, compared with 67% globally. For recruiters, it seems that fostering people and relationships is seen as central to their role and success.

In Asia-Pacific, we've observed the hours recruiters are spending on learning has more than quadrupled from a year earlier. Whether recruiters have been navigating hiring slowdowns, or perhaps working in an industry with a sudden surge in hiring demand, the constant shifts in business priorities, as well as the rapid adoption of new technology has demanded the ability to adapt and take on new skills.

55%

of Asia-Pacific talent professionals say **adaptability** will be the most important skill for recruiters over the next year.⁵

Fastest-growing skills for recruiters in 2020⁶

Personal development



Diversity & inclusion



Talent pipelining



Decision-making



HR strategy



“Recruiters today have to be comfortable with use of data in prioritising and managing their activities. Also understanding social media marketing and how to apply to employer branding.”



Akarin Phureesitr

Head of Human Capital and Organisation Development
Central Pattana (CPN)

Australia

Australia's unique multicultural makeup has seen government policies which encourage diverse hiring.⁷ Initiatives like WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) encourage the employment of women⁸ while various associations promote diverse representation.⁹ This is in part why Australia is a regional leader when it comes to diversity efforts. Globally, it is second only to the United Kingdom when it comes to the number of diversity, inclusion and belonging roles per 10,000 employees.

It's interesting to note that Australian members on LinkedIn are also very responsive to posts about diversity related topics. On average, their engagement with content that speaks to a company's values is 208% above average. We've also observed organisations that talk about their values and diversity initiatives attract a more diverse candidate pool.

Fostering inclusive workplaces, where everyone feels a sense of belonging regardless of their experiences doesn't happen overnight. Talking authentically about diversity efforts, and demonstrating action across your organisation to make it inclusive for all candidates and talent is key. For recruiters, using data to measure and plot diversity goals, so that you can celebrate achievements, but also quickly address shortfalls, will make you indispensable to any organisation's DIBs efforts.

Our survey of Australian talent professionals reflected a focus on diversity that outpaced regional trends.

77% of Australian talent professionals agreed their organisation was committed to diverse hiring, compared to the Asia-Pacific average of 68%.

90% agreed that diversity, inclusion and belonging was something their employer cared about, compared to 76% across the region.

69% reported their organisation had goals around diversity hires, compared to the region's 62%.

Singapore

Singapore recruiters attitudes closely reflect that of their Asia-Pacific colleagues, but for one key difference. In the coming year, they see developing their business acumen and understanding as key for the next year.

Interestingly though, of the surveyed Singaporean recruiters, only 36% agreed their role will become less specialised, compared to the broader region's 41% agreeing it would become more generalised. So while they're anticipating they'll need to respond to business demands, they see they will do that through a talent lens.

When recruiting externally, the market has embraced virtual options. HSBC, for example, shifted it's graduate hiring and onboard process online.¹⁰ This digital overhaul has seen HR offer new hires online access to virtual desktops, remote internships, and host virtual campus events with senior management. Our survey found 68% of Singaporean recruiters thought virtual recruiting would be very important.

Looking ahead, it's clear internal mobility will be a major focus for recruiters in Singapore.

66% expected they'd be more involved in filling open positions with current employees.



61% anticipated there would be an increase in developing internal mobility programs.



57% said they'd see an increase in being a career coach.



Southeast Asia

Prior to the disruption of COVID-19, Southeast Asia was going through a rapid adoption of transformation. In just over a decade, the region had gone from only one in five having an internet connection to become the world's most engaged mobile internet users.¹¹ Its internet economy was expected to grow to US\$300 billion by 2025, with e-commerce and ride hailing services significant drivers of this growth.

In this tech-driven world, recruiters faced a competitive talent market to not only find the right skills for emerging jobs, but keep existing talent up to date with new demands in their roles. So, while COVID-19 caused disruption, how are the talent professionals of Southeast Asia planning to also navigate the digital transformation? Unsurprisingly, a majority of Southeast Asia talent professionals expected evaluating new tech solutions would be a priority for them in the coming year. Most also thought reskilling existing talent would be very important.

Southeast Asia talent professionals are also thinking more about how they can fill roles internally. They were above the Asia-Pacific average in agreeing they would be filling open positions with current employees.

75%

thought COVID-19 would see nurturing employees and building talent pipelines as an increased priority, compared to the Asia-Pacific region's 73%.

64%

saw internal mobility as a priority, compared to 62% of the Asia-Pacific region.



India

As the world's second most populous country shifted to working from home, it was the HR teams that were on the frontline. Having risen to this challenge, India's recruiters are looking ahead at how they and their workforce can be ready to respond to future demands.

By 2027, India is set to have the world's largest workforce, with more than 1 billion people of working age.¹² At the same time there will be ongoing disruption to the types of work they will do, and the skills they need to do those jobs. The World Economic Forum has already estimated more than half of workers in India would need reskilling by 2022.¹³

The need to solve India's workforce puzzle hasn't stopped because of COVID-19. If anything, the sudden demand for tech solutions has shown us all just how integral digitisation is to our lives. However, it's also shown us just how quickly humans can respond and adapt to new environments and demands on their skills.

India's talent professionals clearly recognise that in uncertain times this is a skill worth fostering. 72% said adaptability would be an important skill over the next five years, outpacing the average Asia-Pacific response of 66%.

Talent professionals will be key to making sure the workforce is ready.

85%

thought reskilling the workforce was very important in shaping the future of recruiting, compared to the region's average of 76%.

80%

of talent professionals thought tech automation was very important, compared to Asia-Pacific's average of 73%.

Use Case: Unlocking internal mobility with LinkedIn

How Talent Acquisition and L&D professionals can get a deeper understanding of their people

How to get started: Arm yourself with powerful data to inform your decisions. Internal mobility is a team effort, but even when your organisation is committed to a workforce management strategy, it's difficult to know where to start. That's why we've created powerful tools to help.

LinkedIn Talent Insights

Talent Insights is a talent intelligence platform that empowers you to make smart workforce and hiring decisions.

With our data, your team can

- Gain real-time visibility and insights into your workforce, talent pools and their skills.
- Bridge the skills gaps to your business goals.
- Set the pace for your competitors.
- Use gender insights to inform diverse workforce strategies.

With your guidance, employees can

- Get clarity on skills associated with potential future roles.
- Leverage the organisation's direction to enhance their careers.

- Benefit from specific upskilling/reskilling recommendations.
- Create a stronger sense of belonging and authenticity.

LinkedIn Learning

LinkedIn Learning is a robust online learning platform that your employees will use, love, and apply.

With our data, your team can

- Gain insights into your skills profile and develop data-driven learning programs.
- Easily develop learning paths curated by you and LinkedIn.
- Retain your best talent and drive productivity.
- Understand what skills your employees are developing and prove the impact of L&D.

With your guidance, employees can

- Be empowered to own their career development.
- Get a roadmap for their professional growth.
- Thrive in a culture of learning.
- Improve their engagement with your organisation.

6 tips to improve your internal recruiting

How to develop and promote a culture of Internal Mobility

#1 Reach out proactively

Most internal hires today are initiated by hiring managers or employees themselves – recruiters need to play a bigger role. A call from an internal recruiter can be a retention tool too, whether or not the person moves. It's a pat on the back that says an employee is respected and valued.

#2 Formalise the process for greater diversity

Organic internal moves often happen through existing networks and relationships, which can discourage diversity. Internal recruiting should be structured and proactive rather than relying on employees finding opportunities on their own.

#3 Connect Talent Acquisition with L&D

You'll have a larger talent pool if you think about developing talent for future skills rather than recruiting talent with fixed skills. L&D can help Talent Acquisition by identifying missing skills and upskilling opportunities to help fill the gaps.

#4 Don't seek perfection

Neither external nor internal hires typically come with 100% of the needed skills and experience. Be prepared to train and support your talent as they move into new roles.

#5 Prove the payoff

Give managers good reasons to let go of a top performer. Use data and anecdotes to teach how it's a win for your company and for them and their team. Consider making internal recruiting part of performance reviews and offering incentives.

#6 Give employees a great candidate experience

Every application deserves a polite response. Provide a good experience even for those who don't get hired. A hiring manager may even coach candidates and discuss development opportunities to prepare for success next time around.

Methodology and endnotes

Behavioural data

Insights for this report were derived from the billions of data points generated by more than 706 million members in over 200 countries on LinkedIn today. All data reflects aggregated LinkedIn member activity as of August 2020.

Recruiting professionals are defined as LinkedIn members with current job titles in recruiting, talent acquisition, and related fields. Demand is calculated as the average number of Recruiter InMail messages targeted to recruiting professionals each year since 2016 normalised for growth on the platform. Skills growth is calculated as the increase in percentage of recruiting professionals with relevant skills listed on their LinkedIn profiles or inferred based on other information on their profiles at the time of their employment as a recruiting professional.

Company posts about diversity include non-sponsored updates made to LinkedIn company pages and were identified through keywords like “diversity” and “inclusion” translated into multiple languages. Posts about COVID-19 were identified through keywords like “coronavirus” and “COVID-19” similarly translated into multiple languages. Engagement with company posts was measured as a combination of likes, comments, clicks, and shares and was measured against the average engagement of all company posts in the same timeframe.

To identify remote job postings, LinkedIn used the built-in remote filters and a number of keywords (ex: “remote work”, “work from home”, “home-office”) in 10 different languages. To improve the precision of analysis, only full-time jobs that were premium listings were considered.

Rather than referring to a direct promotion, internal mobility has been defined as transitioning from a role to a dissimilar role within an organisation. The time period considered was from April to August of 2020. Only transitions in which the title, company, location, function, and industry details of both the starting and destination roles were known were considered.

Survey

We surveyed 1,518 professionals globally and 560 in Asia-Pacific (Australia, India, Singapore and rest of Southeast Asia) who self-identified as working, or recently working in, a human resources or talent acquisition role or at a search and staffing agency. The survey was conducted in English, with respondents from over 28 countries. These survey respondents are LinkedIn members who were selected based on information in their LinkedIn profiles. They were contacted via email between June 30 and July 31, 2020.

Methodology and endnotes

Endnotes

1. 15% growth in internal mobility rate in 2020 (till Aug) compared to the average of 2019. Internal mobility rate in 2020 is 16.3% and in 2019 was 14.2%. Internal mobility rate calculated as internal transitions made to dissimilar roles in the organisation as a percentage of all transitions.

2. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/internal-mobility/2020/employees-stay-41-percent-longer-at-companies-that-do-this>

3. The average number of different city-locations applying to remote jobs is 21% higher than non-remote jobs globally.

4. Company posts in Asia-Pacific about these topics saw higher engagement compared to the average engagement of all company posts within the same month.

5. Given a choice of 13 soft skills, 55% of Asia-Pacific talent professionals said adaptability will be the most important skill for recruiters over the next year, followed by oral communication and time management.

6. Skills growth is based on the increase of the share of recruiting professionals with these skills on their LinkedIn profiles in 2020 globally.

7. https://images.forbes.com/forbesinsights/StudyPDFs/global_diversity_rankings_2012.pdf

8. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/terms/eocge>

9. <https://conference-board.org/councils/asia-talent-diversity>

10. <https://www.humanresourcesonline.net/hsbc-singapore-moves-to-digital-recruitment-of-graduates-through-video-interviews-and-online-assessments>

11. https://www.blog.google/documents/47/SEA_Internet_Economy_Report_2019.pdf

12. <https://www.accenture.com/in-en/about/corporate-citizenship/future-reskilling-india>

13. <https://www.weforum.org/our-impact/over-half-of-india-s-workers-will-need-reskilling-by-2022-we-set-up-a-taskforce-to-help>

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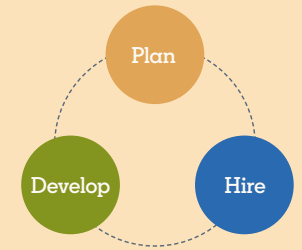
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*Talent Hub is currently only available for select customers in Singapore and Australia.