

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

[29 August 2024 – Hong Kong]

# Attracting Talent and Empowering Future Workforce

## Summary:

1. **Easing Vacancy Challenges - Enhancing Recruitment Strategies to Expand Talent Pool**
2. **2% Growth in Manpower Projection by 2028 - Adapting to Shifting Labour Market Dynamics**
3. **Decrease in Traditional Positions Demand - Upskilling for Competitive Relevance**
4. **Balancing Overseas and Local Talent Recruitment - Leveraging Strengths for Development**

The Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM) initiated the “**Future Workforce Study 2024**”, sponsored by Jobsdb by SEEK. The study was conducted through online surveys from April to June 2024, with the participation of 300 companies and organisations from 20 business sectors. The study aims to gauge the changing manpower needs in Hong Kong up to 2028, understand the factors influencing manpower projections, assess the use of talent admission initiatives in Hong Kong and the challenges that entail, and provide professional insights to the government to assist in formulating more comprehensive policies.

**Mr Lawrence Hung, President of HKIHRM**, stated, “Technological innovation and the development of new quality productivity forces will have a long-term impact on the future workforce. Our study found that companies with different levels of technology adoption exhibit significant differences in the types of talent they require. The government should proactively analyse existing manpower or skill gaps in various industries to develop more targeted measures to attract talent, solidifying Hong Kong’s role as an ‘International Hub for High-calibre Talent’.”

**Bill Lee, Managing Director, Hong Kong of Jobsdb by SEEK**, said, “The survey reflects that Hong Kong employers’ demand for manpower is expected to grow steadily in the coming year. We are pleased to see the government has taken steps to supplement the local labour force and technical talents through various talent admission schemes. Last year, close to 30% of employers have already applied for these schemes with satisfactory results. The survey also suggests the rapid development of AI technology will eventually take over some repetitive tasks. The demand for certain positions like administrative and clerical roles are anticipated to decrease in the future. This will give enterprises more flexibility in deploying their workforce, allowing employees to be liberated from repetitive work and fully utilise their strengths.”

## 1. Easing Vacancy Challenges - Enhancing Recruitment Strategies to Expand Talent Pool

A notable trend has surfaced in the employment landscape of Hong Kong, with employers encountering less difficulty in filling job vacancies. The study indicates a decrease in the proportion of companies that found it “extremely difficult” to fill vacancies, dropping to a record low of 16% between April and June 2024. This marks a significant shift from the survey results since 2022. The improved situation is likely to be attributed to the expanding workforce in Hong Kong and the enhancement of talent admission schemes, revitalising the talent pool and providing employers with a broader spectrum of recruitment options.

Small businesses are finding it relatively easier to fill job vacancies, with 27% expressing that it is “not that difficult” and an additional 9% stating it is “not at all difficult”. This ease could be ascribed to the flexibility in their recruitment process, rendering them better equipped to swiftly fill positions.

In contrast, medium-sized businesses are facing more pronounced challenges in this aspect, with 20% reporting job filling as “extremely difficult” and 63% finding it “quite difficult”. Complex recruitment procedures and heightened competition for top talent are believed to be the primary hurdles impeding their vacancy filling endeavours.

Furthermore, the hospitality & catering sector has been able to fully resume operations since the post-pandemic recovery last year. However, many employees who previously worked in the sector have transitioned to other sectors during the pandemic, resulting in a severe talent shortage in the industry, exacerbating the imbalance between talent supply and demand. The study revealed that 45% of employers in the hospitality & catering sector find recruiting staff “extremely difficult”, with 55% finding it “quite difficult”. Among the most challenging positions to fill in the industry are waiters, cleaners, and housekeeping staff, with difficulty rates of 27%, 27%, and 18% respectively.

Mr Hung suggests that businesses can offer flexible work arrangements for different talent groups (women, young-old and ethnic-minorities) to attract more talent back to the workforce. While certain sectors such as the trading, banking & financial services sectors face fewer challenges in filling vacancies, it is essential to closely monitor market changes to ensure a balance between talent supply and demand.

## 2. 2% Growth in Manpower Projection by 2028 - Adapting to Shifting Labour Market Dynamics

In 2028, the demand for talent in Hong Kong is projected to shift, with an overall manpower growth rate of +2%. This suggests a slight expansion in the need for skilled individuals. Businesses are focusing on recruiting more senior management (+7.4% growth rate) and middle management/professional/supervisory (+5.0% growth rate) to drive business growth.

The study indicates that the demand for manpower in large enterprises is projected to be -0.2%. This decline may be attributed to the potential for large enterprises to introduce more automation and efficiency enhancement measures to alleviate the reliance on manpower. Conversely, small businesses may face a higher growth in manpower demand, estimated at +12.5%. These enterprises might lack the resources to adopt automation and other high-tech solutions for business development, necessitating a continued reliance on human assistance in their operations.

With the trend of technological advancement, certain sectors such as logistics & transportation, retail & wholesale, and telecommunications/ multimedia/technology sectors may experience a decline in manpower demand. The application of automation and AI is expected to streamline certain processes, reducing the reliance on manpower. On the other hand, the architecture/engineering/construction, trading, and property management & real estate development sectors are set for stable growth, with projected increases of +8.4%, +6.4%, and +4.9%, respectively. These sectors will require a substantial workforce in alignment with future development projects in Hong Kong, such as the “The Northern Metropolis” and “Kau Yi Chau Artificial Island”.

Lawrence advises businesses to adapt by implementing effective talent management strategies, such as talent reserves and training and development programmes, to address the evolving demands of the labour market. Proactive and forward-thinking talent management strategies are vital for business success, particularly in navigating challenges arising from an aging population and the rapid technological advancements.

## 3. Decrease in Traditional Positions Demand - Upskilling for Competitive Relevance

Anticipated shifts in job role demand according to employers’ future workforce projections:

Sector	Job Role	Increasing Demand In Roles (%)
IT/Tech	IT Manager, Programmer, Software Engineer, Cloud Engineer	33%
Sales	Sales Manager, Shop Manager, Sales Supervisor/Executive	16%
Admin/Clerical	Assistant, Front Office Staff	10%
Technical Support	Technicians	9%
Data Science	Data Analyst, Data Engineer	7%

Sector	Job Role	Decreasing Demand In Roles (%)
Admin/Clerical	Admin Officer, Clerk, Secretary	71%
Customer Service	Help desk/hotline operator, Receptionist, CS Officer	10%
Accounting	Accounting Clerk/Officer, Bookkeeper	10%
Human Resource	HR Officer, HR Assistant	10%
Operations	Operations Analyst, Operations Officer/Assistant	9%

The job role in certain fields such as IT/Tech, Sales, and Technical Support are expected to have relatively stable growth in demand. Positions in IT/Tech such as IT managers, programmers, software engineers, and cloud engineers are projected to see an upward trend, reflecting the increasing importance of the tech industry in the future. Additionally, the demand for technical support personnel is expected to rise in line with the expansion of business operations.

Lawrence highlights that 71% of businesses anticipate a decrease in Admin/Clerical positions in the future, while 10% plan to increase these roles. This reflects the automation potential in administrative roles, allowing companies to enhance efficiency through technology, potentially leading to a decrease in the demand for such positions. Nevertheless, small and medium-sized businesses that have not yet embraced digital technology may still require more administrative staff to meet business needs.

Lawrence underscores the impact of technological advancements and automation trends on future workplace dynamics. He stresses the importance for employees to prioritise skill enhancement and career planning to align with the ever-evolving market needs. He advocates for collaborative efforts between the government and businesses to offer training and support, enabling employees to effectively adapt to the changing work environment and ultimately achieve mutual success.

#### 4. Balancing Overseas and Local Talent Recruitment - Leveraging Strengths for Development

The study delved into the adoption of various talent admission schemes, revealing that while many businesses find filling vacancies challenging, only 28% of companies implemented talent admission schemes in 2023, with 61% opting not to do so. The primary reasons for eschewing these schemes include “more straightforward to recruit locally” (43%), “cost considerations” (26%), and “non-local talents not suitable for our jobs” (22%). 96% of surveyed companies in the trading sector and 88% companies in the retail/wholesale sector indicated that it is “more straightforward to recruit locally”.

Among the companies that adopted talent admission schemes, 58% opted for the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) to recruit non-local talents. These candidates, having received education in Hong Kong, possess a solid understanding of the local culture and work environment, facilitating their seamless integration into the workforce. On the other hand, the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) saw 29% of companies leveraging it, with high-end talents primarily applying for mid to senior-level positions. Recognising the TTPS has been in place for less than two years, employers likely need more time to reflect on its usage and enhance awareness.

Businesses recognise several benefits of recruiting non-local talents, including their ability to “filling skill gaps in local talent pool” (65%) and “relief of labour shortage” (63%). Moreover, 39% of companies perceive the technical skills of non-local talents as “extremely competitive”, with an additional 34% considering them “quite competitive”. By recruiting non-local talents, companies can expand their talent pool and enhance competitiveness further.

The study also shed light on the main challenges faced by non-local talents in Hong Kong, namely accommodation (67%), adapting to local work habits (67%), and language barriers (55%). To facilitate their integration into the work environment, employers primarily offer subsidy in housing/rental (39%) and organise cultural integration activities or events (36%). Companies also look to the government for support, particularly in providing advice on visa extension processes (69%) and detailed immigration

& talent admission information (55%), thereby facilitating the smooth integration of more non-local talents to enhance the overall work experience and retention rates.

Bill believes that diverse employment opportunities, generous compensation and low tax regime continue to be important advantages for Hong Kong in establishing itself as an international talent hub. As Hong Kong is undergoing industrial transformation, employers hiring foreign talents can facilitate mutual learning between local and foreign employees, thereby promoting the development of Hong Kong's talent pool. He suggests that the government can enhance its collaboration with industry, focusing on education or promotion initiatives. By organising targeted seminars, they can introduce the relevant talent admission schemes to employers based on the nature of their industries. The government should also increase the transparency of the approval process, allowing employers to better understand the application progress. It will boost their confidence in utilising the talent admission schemes.

## 5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Lawrence emphasised, "The government should actively listen to industry feedback, provide more proactive measures for businesses to fill vacancies, and adjust talent admission schemes based on actual circumstances to effectively attract overseas talents to supplement the local talent pool. By enhancing policies and living support tailored to talent development, we can attract more international top talents to collaborate with local talents in empowering Hong Kong's high-quality development and contribute to the country's new quality productivity forces."

Bill concludes, "The survey results indicate that Hong Kong employers still generally prioritise hiring local talents, with the employment of foreign talent primarily aimed at filling skills gaps. This reflects a persistent shortage of technically skilled talents in the local market. For local employees to maintain their advantage and competitiveness, they should stay attuned to the market's needs, maintain a lifelong learning mindset, and continuously upskill and acquire new skills, enabling themselves to adapt to the rapidly changing market conditions."

Please [click here](#) for the photos of the media briefing.

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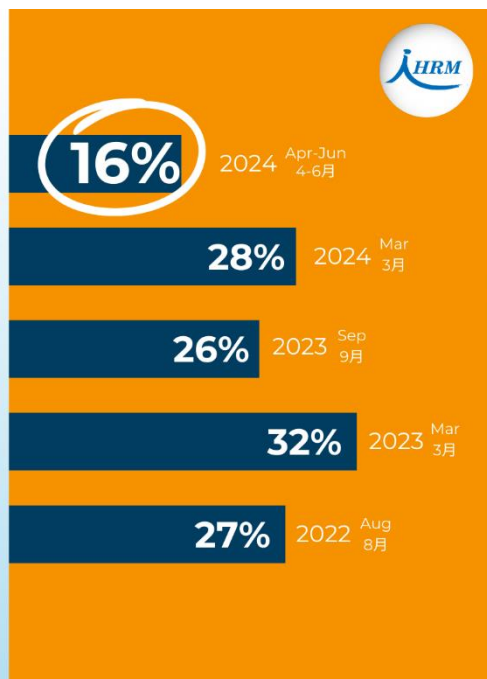
## Difficulty in Filling Vacancies 填補職缺困難度

The proportion of employers who consider filling job vacancies **extremely difficult** has dropped to 16% in the latest survey, marking the lowest level since 2022.

認為填補職缺**極度困難**的僱主比例在最新調研中降至16%，是自2022年以來最低水平。



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## Difficulty in Filling Vacancies 填補職缺困難度 By Business Sector 按行業劃分

### Sectors Relatively More Affected 相對受影響較大的行業

	Hospitality & Catering 酒店及餐飲業	Property Management & Real Estate Development 物業管理及房地產開發業	Architecture, Engineering & Construction 建築、工程和建造業
★★★★ Extremely Difficult 極度困難	45%	0%	16%
★★★ Quite Difficult 相當困難	55%	83%	64%

### Sectors Relatively Less Affected 相對受影響較少的行業

	Trading 貿易業	Manufacturing 製造業	Banking & Financial Services 銀行及金融服務業
★★ Not that difficult 不太困難	50%	27%	23%
★ Not at all difficult 沒有困難	5%	9%	8%



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## Manpower Projections for 2028 人力資源推算2028

- Projected Manpower Growth by 2028  
預計2028年人力資源增長

**+2%**



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## Manpower Projections for 2028 人力資源推算2028 **By Job Level 按職級劃分**

**Top Executive /  
Management**  
高級主管/管理層

**Senior  
Management**  
資深管理層

**Middle Management /  
Professional /  
Supervisory**  
中層管理層/專業人士/主管

**General / Supporting**  
初級/後勤

**-2.2%**

**+7.4%**

**+5.0%**

**+0.6%**

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## Manpower Projections for 2028 人力資源推算2028

### Increasing Demand In Roles 未來需求會增加職位的行業

#### IT/ Tech 資訊科技 33%

- Software Engineer 軟件工程師
- Cloud Engineer 雲端工程師
- IT Manager IT經理
- Programmer 程序員

#### Sales 銷售 16%

- Sales Manager 銷售經理
- Shop Manager 店舖經理
- Sales Supervisor / Executive 銷售主管 / 銷售員

#### Admin/ Clerical 行政/文書 10%

- Assistant 助理
- Front Office Staff 前線員工

### Decreasing Demand In Roles 未來需求會減少職位的行業

#### Admin/ Clerical 行政/文書 71%

- Admin Officer 行政人員
- Clerk 文員
- Secretary 秘書

#### Customer Service 客戶服務 10%

- Help desk/ hotline operator 前台/接線生
- Receptionist 接待員
- CS Officer 客服人員

#### Accounting 會計 10%

- Accounting Clerk/ Officer 會計文員
- Bookkeeper 簿記員

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## Benefits of Hiring Non-Local Talents 僱主認為僱用非本地人才的好處

1

Filling skill gaps in local talent pool  
填補本地人才庫中的技能差距

65%

2

Relief of labour shortage  
緩解勞動力短缺

63%

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## Employers' Wishlist of Government Support For Talent Admission Schemes Talents 僱主期望政府在人才入境計劃上提供的支援

1

Advice on visa extension processes  
就簽證續期流程提供建議

69%

2

Providing detailed immigration & talent admission information  
提供詳細的移民及人才入境計劃資訊

55%

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## Employers' Suggestion On Areas Of Improvement for Talent Admission Schemes 僱主對人才入境計劃的建議



Simplify procedures  
精簡 / 簡化程序 **64%**



Shorten approval time  
縮短審批時間 **49%**



Help desk assisting employers to apply  
設立服務台以協助僱主申請 **37%**



Guides, toolkits, online resources  
提供指引、工具包和線上資源 **33%**



Talks & seminars to introduce schemes  
舉辦講座、研討會，向僱主介紹人才入境計劃 **27%**

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## Media Enquiry

This is a joint press release issued by HKIHRM and on behalf of the JobsDB Group (Hong Kong) by MSL Group.

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## About Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management

As the most representative HR professional body in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM) has a membership close to 5,000, of which around 500 are corporate members. Founded in 1977, the HKIHRM aims at enhancing HR professional standards, and increasing the HR profession's influence. Serving HR practitioners, corporations and SMEs, the Institute organises a wide range of professional programmes, including annual conference, seminars, awards programme, and multi-level training. It also provides various membership services, surveys, and an online journal. The HKIHRM is a member of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management.

<http://www.hkihrm.org>

## About Jobsdb by SEEK

Jobsdb is a leading employment marketplace, connecting the right people with the right work in Hong Kong since 1998. Operated by SEEK, an Australian Securities Exchange-listed company, Jobsdb combines its deep local expertise with SEEK's world-class AI technology and platform to create relevant job and talent matches across Asia Pacific. For more information, visit [www.jobsdb.com](http://www.jobsdb.com).