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What are the top jobs in 2024?

By Aliza Shah - April 14, 2024 @ 7:02am



People heading to work in Kuala Lumpur. Jobstreet by Seek Malaysia's Hiring Compensation and Benefits Report 2024 says this year will see an increase in tech and digital-related jobs. FILE PIC

KUALA LUMPUR: The adoption of technology has brought about changes to the job landscape, leading to the emergence of new roles and making others obsolete.

Apart from the creation of new jobs, employers are demanding a more diverse skill set from their workforce.

The *New Sunday Times* spoke to recruitment platform JobStreet and the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) to gain an insight into shifting employment requirements.

WHAT ARE THE TOP JOBS?

Vic Sithasanan, Jobstreet by Seek Malaysia managing director, said that based on its Hiring Compensation and Benefits Report 2024, the top full-time position that companies were hiring were for administrative and human resources, which showed a 39 per cent increase in 2023.

This, he said, were followed by sales and business development (31 per cent increase) and accounting (29 per cent increase).

Other positions include marketing and branding (21 per cent), information technology, or IT (20 per cent), and engineering (15 per cent).

Vic said it expected to see an increase in tech and digital-related jobs, given that the digital technology industry was projected to make up 22.6 per cent of the gross domestic product in 2024.

"Industry statistics show digital job vacancies have tripled and the industry with the highest increase in median salary is computer and IT, according to the JobStreet Salary Guide 2023," he said.

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said among the in-demand jobs were those tied to digital transformation and sustainable energy, roles relevant to the rising trend of online shopping, and healthcare.

As Malaysia focused on digital transformation, there was a growing demand for IT professionals, software developers and tech specialists, he said

He added that jobs related to AI, machine learning, data science, and cybersecurity would remain in high demand.

The increasing popularity of online shopping, on the other hand, brings demand for positions in e-commerce, digital marketing and social media management.

"Malaysia has shown an interest in sustainable practices and renewable energy, so job roles related to environmental impact assessment, sustainable development and renewable energy projects may see growth.

"Lastly, the pandemic highlighted the importance of healthcare, so roles in healthcare technology, telemedicine, and biotechnology may see increased demand."

JOBS DECLINING IN DEMAND

Syed Hussain said the three categories of jobs that would see decline in demand were low-skilled jobs that involved routine tasks, some retail positions and manual labour in agriculture.

"Routine jobs or repetitive tasks that can be automated may face a decline in demand.

"These include certain roles in manufacturing, data entry and simple administrative tasks, which can be replaced by AI.

"Secondly, the rise of e-commerce, which changes consumer behaviour, will affect traditional retail roles.

"Traditional agricultural practices that rely on manual labour may face challenges due to technological advancement.

"Jobs such as oil palm fruit plucking may face lower opportunities due to automation."

INDUSTRIES GROWING RAPIDLY

Syed Hussain said five industries that saw significant growth were technology and IT, e-commerce, finance and fintech, healthcare and biotechnology, and tourism and hospitality.

Technology, he said, logged the most significant growth with companies involved in software development, IT services and digital transformation seen actively hiring professionals, such as software developers, data scientists, cybersecurity experts and IT project managers.

He said the e-commerce industry was driven by increasing Internet penetration, which allowed for a growing online consumer base.

He said the financial services sector, including fintech, was expanding, so employers were looking for professionals to fill in areas, such as financial technology, data analytics and digital banking.

He said the healthcare industry was growing, with the pandemic helping to underscore the importance of healthcare and innovation, leading to increased demand for healthcare professionals, technology specialists and professionals in the biotechnology sector.

The other sectors that were booming in the post-pandemic world were tourism and hospitality.

"Before the pandemic, Malay-sia was a popular tourist destination, and the tourism and hospitality industry played a significant role in the economy.

"While this sector faced challenges due to travel restrictions, there are expectations for a rebound and potential growth in job opportunities in tourism and hospitality industry."

Vic said Jobstreet's data indicated that industries with the highest number of job vacancies were hospitality and tourism, accounting and retail, as well as consumer products.

This, he said, could be attributed to the gradual economic recovery, leading businesses to expand.

"The increase in job postings varies.

"Hospitality and tourism saw the highest number of job ads posted in 2023, with a notable increase from 11,000 to 12,500 from the first quarter to the second.

"The job ad postings in this industry were the highest in total against other industries, which are around 47,000.

"Accounting came in second at around 39,000 job postings for 2023, with a hike in the first quarter.

"Retail and consumer products came in third with around 34,000 job postings in 2023," he said.

TECHNICAL SKILLS DEMANDED BY EMPLOYERS

Syed Hussein said technology and skills that were becoming more critical were AI technology adoption, cybersecurity and cloud computing, data management and software development.

AI technology adoption and application has been seen in the banking sector, education, healthcare and agriculture.

"Programming, data analytics and machine learning are some examples of skills needed with AI technology adoption.

"As increasing digital transformation also comes with increasing cyber threats, cybersecurity is essential to Malaysia's digital transformation (journey).

"Cloud computing, data management and software development are critical to maintaining and propelling digitalisation and its infrastructure."

Meanwhile, Vic said demand for skilled workers, such as those with expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, was expected to surge in the coming years as industries pivot to technology-driven operations.

SOFT SKILLS DEMANDED BY EMPLOYERS

He said the demand and supply of skills had evolved as industries become more reliant on technology.

"Interpersonal and relationship skills have become a higher priority, as research found that companies with effective communication and collaboration practices are up to 25 per cent more productive.

"This include skills like data-driven decision-making, resilience, flexibility, curiosity, listening and leadership."

Vic highlighted skills that jobseekers should have: agility, adaptability and readiness in a job market; digital literacy; adaptability; interpersonal skills; multi-tasking; efficiency and time management.

"With the demand for hybrid working, interpersonal skills are significant in creating sturdy work relationships."

He said that although rapid digitalisation and automation had caused many everyday roles and skills to become less relevant, some soft and interpersonal skills remained crucial.

"For example, while artificial intelligence will cause a significant decrease in entry-level knowledge worker roles, this creates an opportunity to develop skills in using emerging AI tools and technologies within specific roles and industries.

"The application of AI for businesses will amplify human skills, rather than replace them.

"So there will always be a need for talent to problem-solve and identify patterns that support any algorithmic or AI-supported solution."

Syed Hussein said soft skills required by employers were teamwork, communication and leadership.

"The World Economic Forum indicated that the work skills of tomorrow by 2025 were analytical thinking and innovation, active learning and learning strategies, complex problem-solving skills, critical thinking and analysis and creativity, originality and initiative."

