JacksonGrant

*Executive*

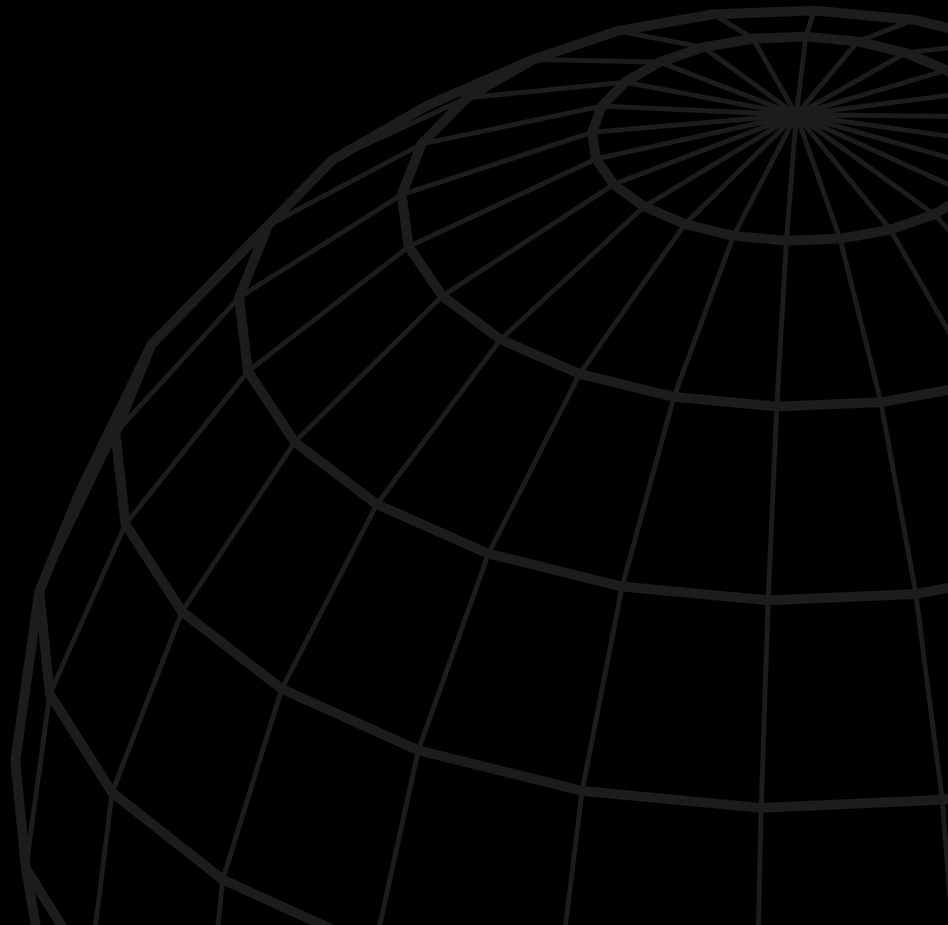
# Thailand's 2030 Workforce Survey

## Navigating Hiring Trends and Talent Strategies



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# Executive Summary

Thailand's labour market is at a turning point as it approaches 2030. Digital transformation, shifting demographics, and evolving government policies are redefining how organisations attract, retain, and develop senior talent.

Employers face acute challenges in sourcing niche technical skills, aligning executive rewards with expectations, and planning for leadership continuity. At the same time, candidates are increasingly seeking flexibility, career progression, and access to international opportunities.

Our research, drawing on insights from over 100 business leaders and professionals, highlights both the risks and opportunities ahead. While skill shortages and executive succession gaps are pressing concerns, employers have an opportunity to strengthen pipelines through targeted upskilling, competitive reward strategies, and flexible work models.

With AI, automation, and new industries accelerating change, executive readiness will be the defining factor in future workforce resilience.

**Richard Jackson**
Managing Director & Co-Founder



## 5 Forces Reshaping Executive Talent in Thailand

### Specialist Skills Under Pressure

Employers continue to struggle to secure niche and technical expertise. Proactive succession planning and long-term leadership development are now essential, not optional.

### Building Domestic Leadership Capacity

Investing in domestic executive capability will be critical to sustaining leadership continuity in the face of regional competition.

### Global Mobility

Candidates increasingly want international exposure and remote opportunities. Employers must adapt talent strategies or risk losing senior talent to those offering mobility and flexibility.

### Digital Transformation

Almost all professionals recognise that digitalisation has already reshaped their roles. Executives who can lead digital adoption, rather than simply respond, will be indispensable to business growth.

### AI Readiness at Board Level

Future leaders must combine strategic vision with the ability to harness AI responsibly, balancing innovation with governance and ethical considerations.



# Report Overview

This report explores the long-term trends shaping Thailand's workforce as the country looks ahead to 2030. It examines the impact of demographic change, digital transformation, automation, and evolving government policies on the labour market, with a focus on how these forces are reshaping both opportunities and challenges for employers.

The research identifies the most pressing skill shortages for employers, and at the same time, it captures the perspectives of Thai professionals, whose developing expectations are transforming the employer–employee relationship. By combining insights from both groups this report provides a balanced view of the shifts underway.

The objective is to help both multinational corporations and local organisations develop strategies to attract, retain, and future-proof their executive talent pipelines in an increasingly competitive and complex environment.



## Methodology

This research is based on survey responses from over 100 business leaders and professionals in Thailand. Conducted by JacksonGrant in 2025, the survey examined attitudes, preparedness, and expectations relating to the future of work, with a particular focus on the role of AI in the workplace. Responses were analysed to uncover common challenges, emerging opportunities, and long-term workforce trends expected to shape the Thai labour market by 2030. The findings provide a dual perspective, reflecting both organisational priorities and candidate expectations, to inform future-ready talent strategies.

# Key Workforce Trends

The next ten to 15 years will be decisive for Thailand's talent market. A shrinking workforce characterised by a severely aging population is contributing to intensifying competition for specialist skills and leadership capacity. While candidates can afford to become more selective about the opportunities they pursue. This mirrors broader shifts across the APAC region, but Thailand's labour market has some distinct characteristics that demand targeted strategies.

Executive pipelines are fragile. Employers consistently highlight the scarcity of technical expertise and leadership skills. Unlike larger APAC economies such as Singapore or Australia, Thailand cannot rely on a constant inflow of expatriate talent to plug these gaps. Long-term solutions require a stronger domestic pipeline and investment in local leadership capacity to keep pace with growth.

Employers are gradually moving toward contract-based and project-specific talent models. Hybrid and cross-border teams are gaining traction, as organisations balance cost efficiency with access to scarce skills. In Thailand, where many industries still favour on-site models, this represents both a challenge in adapting corporate culture and management practices.

At the same time, candidate expectations are shifting. Across the region, professionals are showing a tendency to evaluate roles on career progression, purpose, and lifestyle alongside compensation. As Thai professionals anticipate more international opportunities and demand greater flexibility, employers who rely of rigid employment models risk losing senior talent to regional competitors who offer more fluid and attractive career pathways.



> "The most significant challenge facing Thailand's labour market by 2030 is the acute shortage of skilled talent due to an ageing population and education system gaps, which raise hiring costs and risk economic growth.
>
> However, this also presents an opportunity to embrace digital transformation, lifelong learning, and increased female labour participation to sustain workforce productivity and meet future skill demands."
>
> **Thomas Dilly, General Manager - Business Development, Rhenus Logistics**

# The Role of Government Policy in Shaping the Workforce

Government policy will play a decisive role in shaping Thailand's workforce by 2030. A minority of employers currently see regulation as a key influence on workforce access and cost, but the pace and ambition of initiatives make policy a central driver of future hiring challenges.

Thailand 4.0 prioritises advanced industries such as semiconductors, data centres, and AI-enabled services, sectors where talent pipelines are already under strain. The government has committed to producing more than 80,000 semiconductor specialists within five years, yet the country is still short around 80,000 AI professionals.

These sectors are also energy intensive. Commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050 and draft AI legislation aims to match international standards while addressing domestic workforce implications, such as reskilling, labour protections and data privacy, but execution will be critical.

Executive pipelines must prioritise digital fluency, regulatory awareness, and ESG leadership to remain competitive. Success will hinge on building leadership capacity with the technical skills to navigate policy-driven transformation.



# The Future of Remote and Contract Work

Our research shows that work structures in Thailand are undergoing significant transformation. Employers are open to hybrid and project-based models, but professionals remain cautious, revealing a gap between organisational ambition and candidate preference.

Organisations in Thailand anticipate broader adoption of hybrid and remote work as they move toward more agile workforce strategies. Many also expect contract, freelance, and project-based roles to expand by 2030, reflecting a regional trend seen in markets like Singapore and the Philippines, where gig and interim executive models are already well established. For Thai employers, the shift is less about cost savings and more about creating the agility to access niche expertise.

Despite this, most Thai professionals still favour the security of permanent, full-time roles. Contracting and freelancing are not yet the default career path for senior executives in Thailand, unlike in some APAC markets where portfolio careers are more common. Yet many executives highlight the lack of options, indicating that while they value stability, they also expect employers to offer greater flexibility at senior levels.

More than half of the executives we surveyed want more access to international or remote opportunities. If Thai employers cannot provide global pathways, senior talent will look to multinationals and regional competitors who can.

## Flexibility Divide: Employers vs Candidates



32%

of employers expect to increase their use of flexible, contract, or project-based workers by 2030.



44%

of employers expect an increased adoption of remote and hybrid work models across Thailand by 2030.



78%

of candidates seek full-time permanent roles, with 16% preferring contract work.



53%

of candidates would like to see more international/remote roles open to Thai candidates.

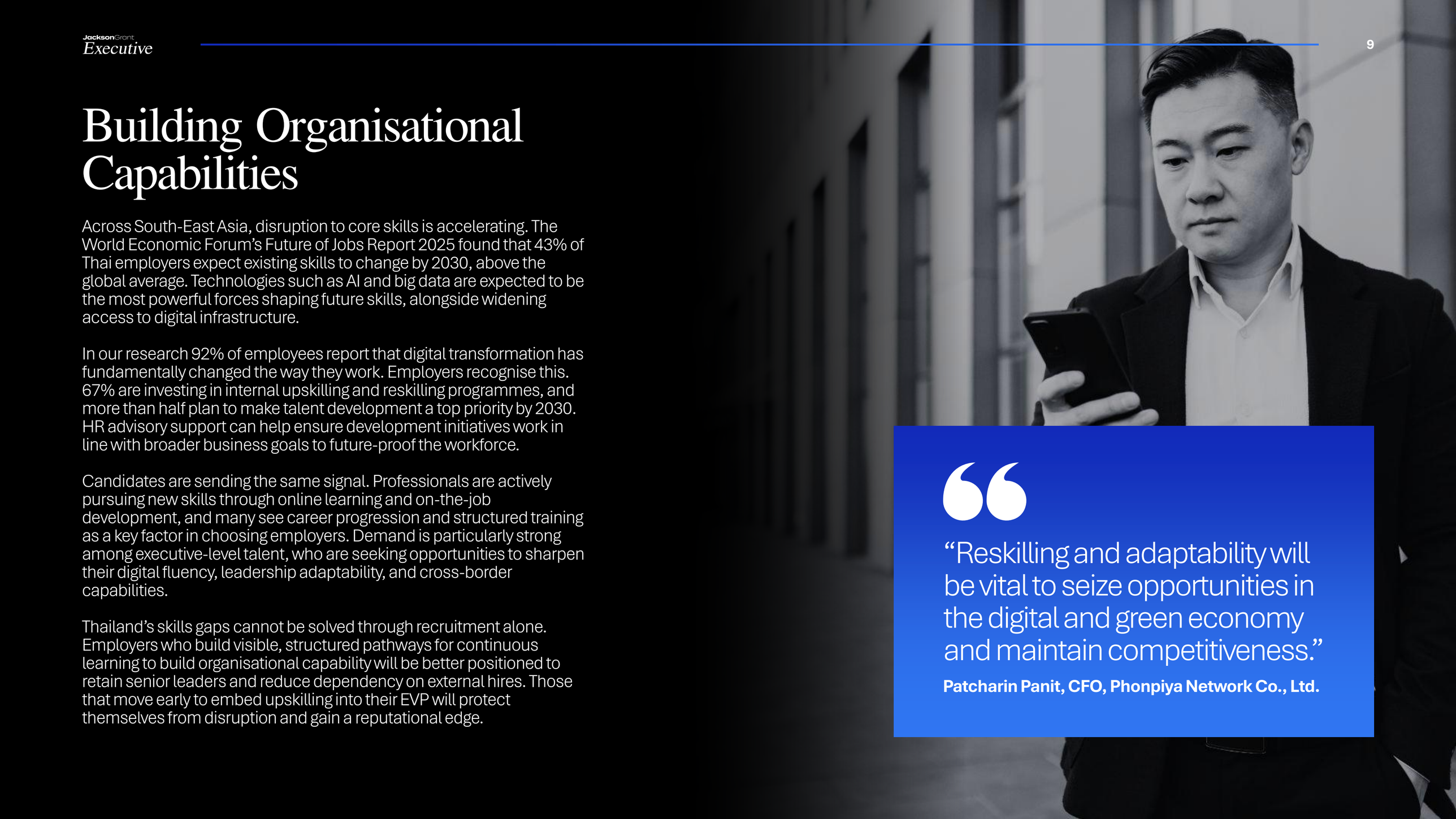
# Building Organisational Capabilities

Across South-East Asia, disruption to core skills is accelerating. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 found that 43% of Thai employers expect existing skills to change by 2030, above the global average. Technologies such as AI and big data are expected to be the most powerful forces shaping future skills, alongside widening access to digital infrastructure.

In our research 92% of employees report that digital transformation has fundamentally changed the way they work. Employers recognise this. 67% are investing in internal upskilling and reskilling programmes, and more than half plan to make talent development a top priority by 2030. HR advisory support can help ensure development initiatives work in line with broader business goals to future-proof the workforce.

Candidates are sending the same signal. Professionals are actively pursuing new skills through online learning and on-the-job development, and many see career progression and structured training as a key factor in choosing employers. Demand is particularly strong among executive-level talent, who are seeking opportunities to sharpen their digital fluency, leadership adaptability, and cross-border capabilities.

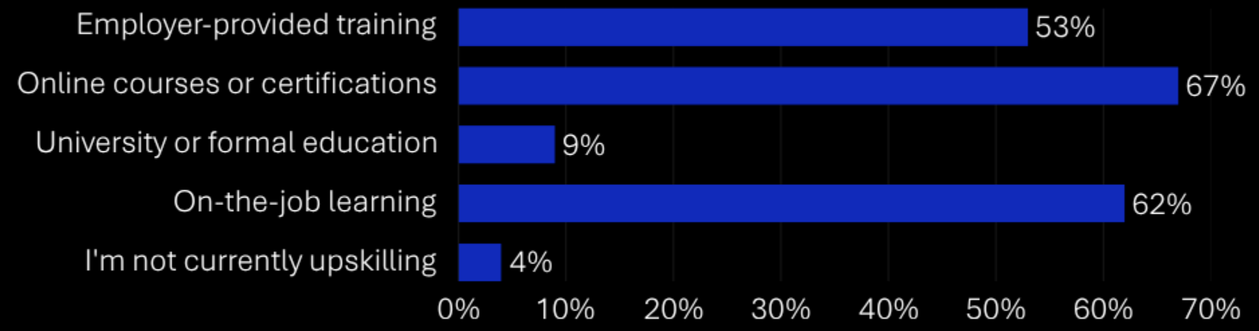
Thailand's skills gaps cannot be solved through recruitment alone. Employers who build visible, structured pathways for continuous learning to build organisational capability will be better positioned to retain senior leaders and reduce dependency on external hires. Those that move early to embed upskilling into their EVP will protect themselves from disruption and gain a reputational edge.



> "Reskilling and adaptability will be vital to seize opportunities in the digital and green economy and maintain competitiveness."
>
> **Patcharin Panit, CFO, Phonpiya Network Co., Ltd.**

# How Employers and Candidates Are Tackling the Skills Gap

**Candidate Survey Q9 - How are you currently developing new skills or knowledge?**




**Client Survey Q12 - How are you addressing skills gaps within your business?**






# Impact of AI and Automation on the Workforce

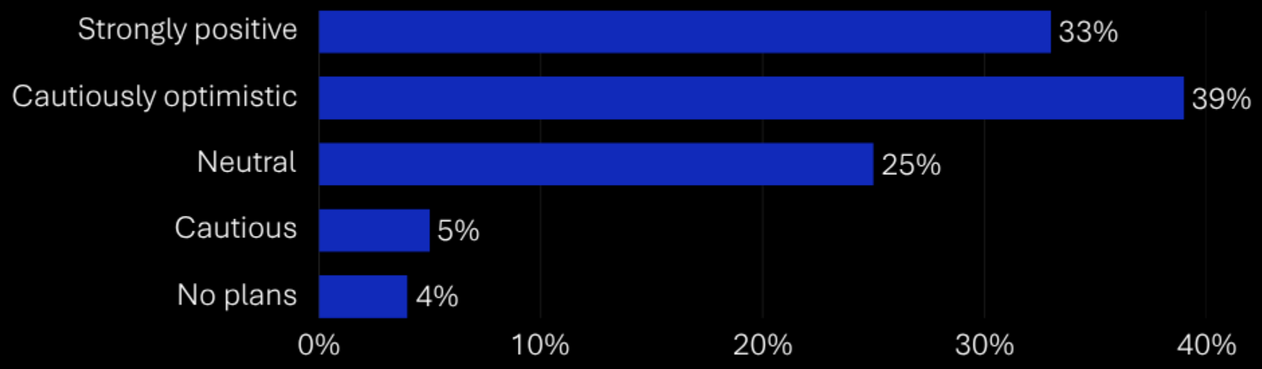
AI adoption is rapidly reshaping the Thai labour market, but the question remains whether leaders are ready to harness it. Enthusiasm for AI is high yet despite strong interest, adoption levels remain behind peers such as Singapore and Malaysia, with only one in five Thai workers currently using AI in practice. However, executives are already more likely than the general workforce to use AI in their day-to-day roles, seeing it as an opportunity to improve their work.

With resistance to AI minimal among employees, the challenge lies in employer readiness. Without clear strategies for adoption, Thailand risks lagging in productivity and competitiveness, but with targeted investment, it could leapfrog into a regional leadership position.

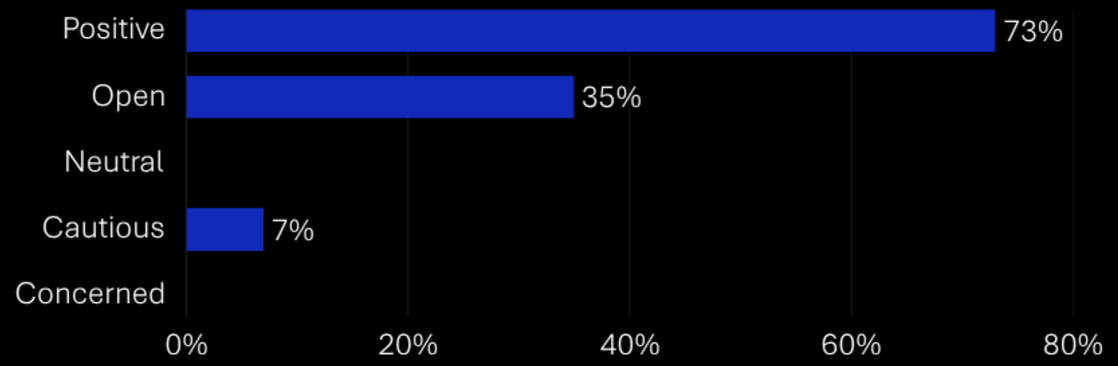
Around a third of Thai employers are already using automation to reduce reliance on headcount. However, a bigger imperative is to embed AI fluency at the leadership level, allowing boards and executive teams can evaluate AI's risks, set governance frameworks, and translate emerging technologies into business value. Without this capability, organisations will struggle to compete with regional peers whose leaders are already embedding AI into decision-making and talent strategies.

## AI in Thailand: Excitement, Adoption, and Executive Readiness

**Client Survey Q13 - What is your overall outlook on AI in the workplace?**




**Candidate Survey Q10 - How do you feel about the role of AI in your current or future work?**



# Recruitment and Talent Acquisition Insights

Here are some key insights into the recruitment landscape for mid to senior executives in Thailand that emerged from our survey and what organisations can do to stay ahead.

## Moving toward 2030

Employers demand globally experienced leaders and are adopting new work models to deal with intensifying shortages in technical and leadership roles. Candidates anticipate more international opportunities and greater emphasis on continuous learning.

Going forward, investment in developing local leaders needs to increase while also creating pathways for organisations to access global talent pools.

## Effective recruitment channels

Recruitment agencies remain the dominant channel for senior hires, valued for their speed and reach. Relying too heavily on external agencies risks long-term dependency. Employers are beginning to diversify, using internal referrals, online platforms, and social networks to engage passive talent. Best-in-class companies in APAC combine these channels with proactive employer branding to reduce hiring costs and build sustainable pipelines.

## Recruitment outsourcing

Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) is gaining ground in Thailand for its ability to deliver faster access to candidates and stronger quality of hire. Yet concerns around cultural alignment, control, and ROI persist.

Employers who succeed with outsourcing treat it as a strategic partnership, setting clear governance structures, aligning on EVP, and ensuring the provider reflects the company's culture and standards.

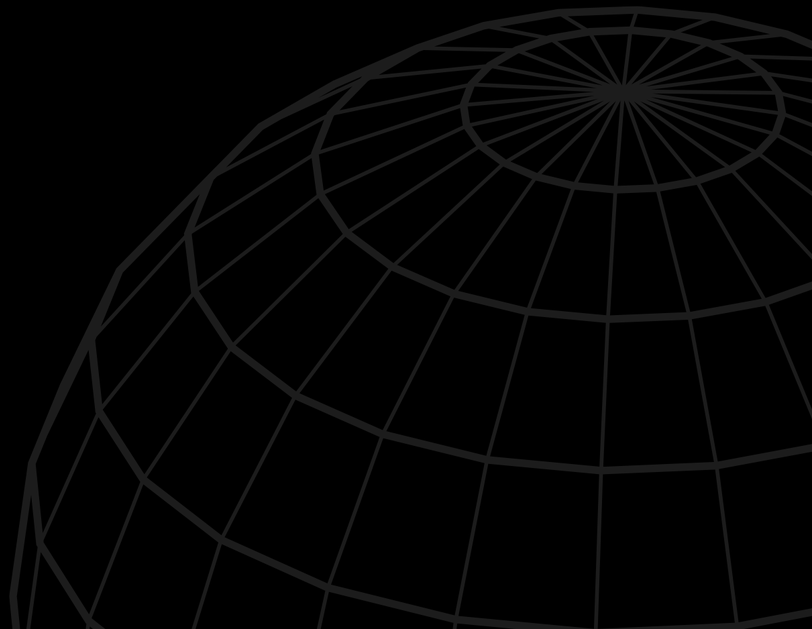
## Reward and retention gaps

A growing proportion of executives report that compensation packages in Thailand fall below expectations. The issue is broader than base compensation which often trails regional benchmarks, making Thai offers less competitive against peers in Singapore or Vietnam.

Benefits packages are limited, with insufficient emphasis on health, wellbeing, and family support. Career progression frameworks offer too few structured pathways into senior leadership. Low performance incentives reduce motivation to drive innovation and long-term results.

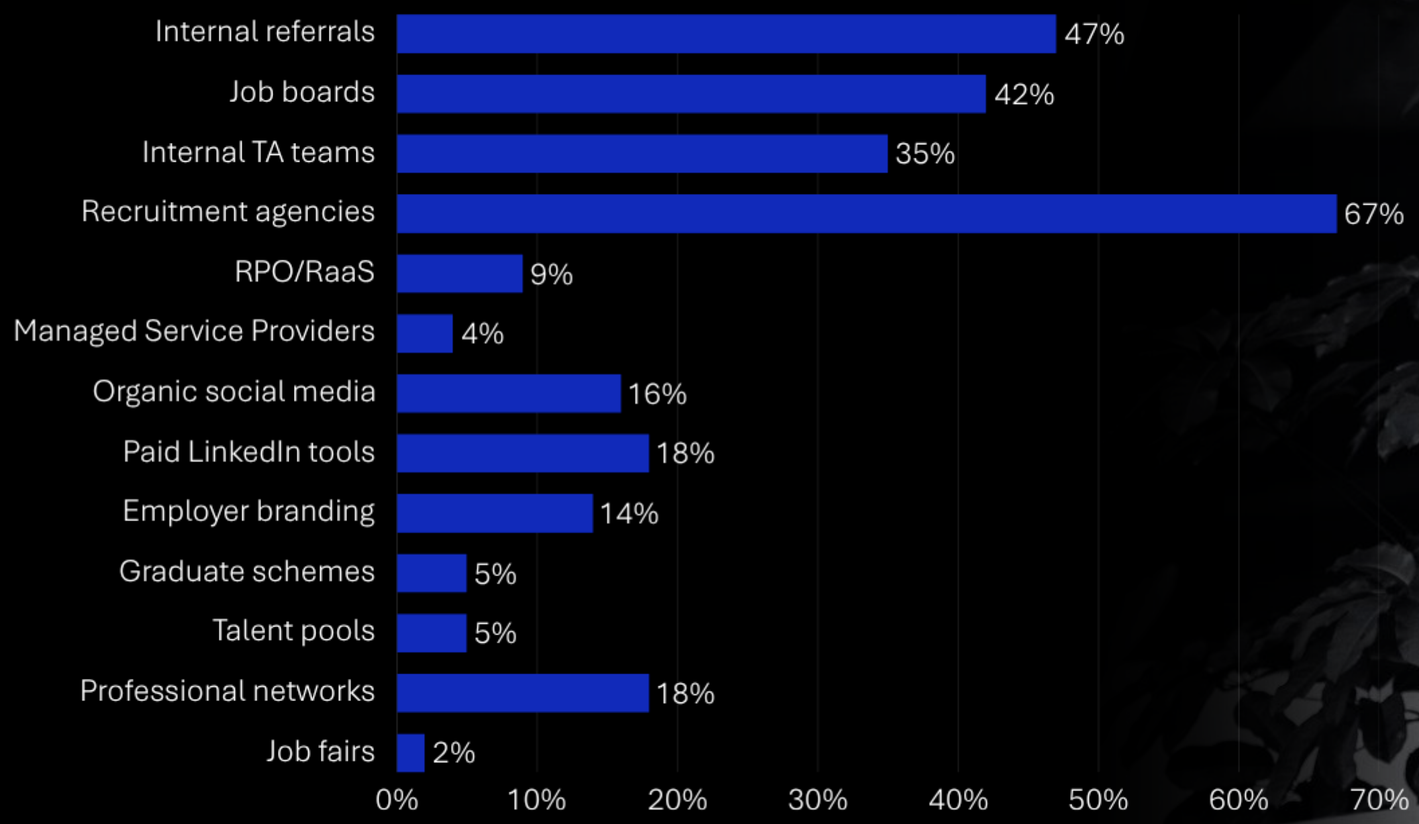
In a market where senior talent is increasingly mobile, closing these gaps is essential.

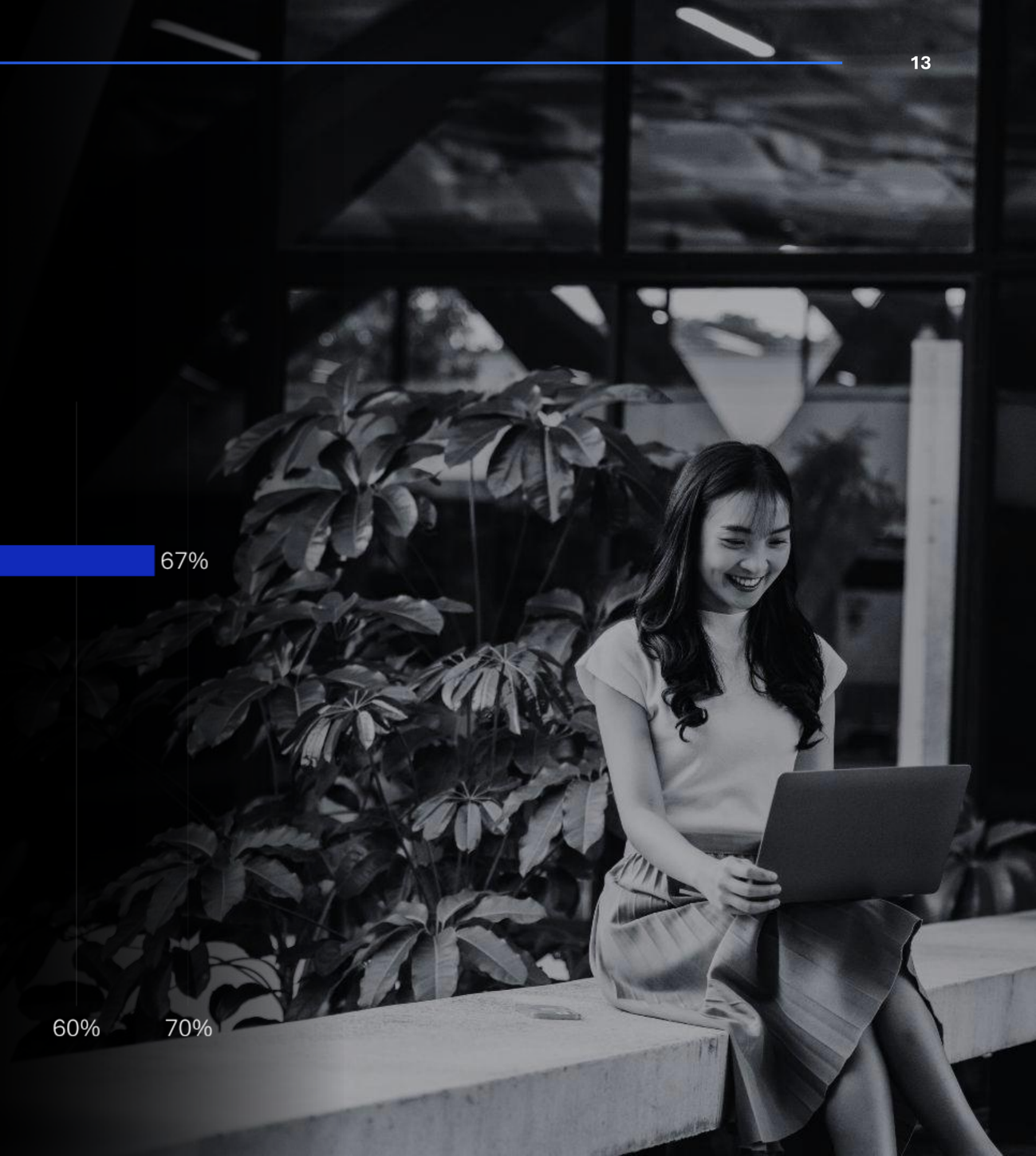
**Winning senior talent in Thailand demands action now. That means systematic succession planning, broader sourcing, and compensation that matches APAC benchmarks. Employers who move early will set the standard for leadership in Thailand and the region.**



# Executive Recruitment Channels: What Works Best in Thailand

**Q4 - Which recruitment channels have been most effective for you in Thailand?**



# Challenges and Opportunities in Hiring

Hiring mid to senior executives in Thailand presents both acute challenges and emerging opportunities. While most employers remain moderately confident in their ability to compete for senior talent, recurring issues continue to erode employer brand equity and limit hiring outcomes.

## Candidate Experience

Many executives report long and opaque hiring processes, with limited feedback or communication from employers. Candidates often commit to multiple interviews only to be left waiting for updates or receive no closure at all. This undermines trust, damages reputation, and spreads quickly in tight executive networks.

Best practice: provide timely feedback, set transparent timelines, and ensure respectful candidate treatment. Senior candidates judge the professionalism of the process as a reflection of your leadership culture.

## Culture Fit

Too often "culture fit" translates into vague notions rather than actionable criteria. In Thailand, good fit hinges on alignment in leadership style, decision-making speed, and approach to hierarchy. Executives who bring global experience may struggle in environments that still favour consensus and formality, while local leaders can find it difficult to adapt to matrixed, cross-border structures. Best practice: define culture explicitly, through behaviours, leadership expectations, and ways of working, then assess candidates against these markers rather than relying on intuition.

## Leadership Continuity

Many organisations react to leadership turnover rather than prepare for it. This approach creates instability, especially in industries undergoing digital transformation or regulatory disruption. Proactive succession planning, linked to structured leadership development, offers employers a way to de-risk executive hiring while strengthening internal pipelines.

*Best practice: embed succession planning into business strategy, with clear development pathways and regular leadership readiness reviews for stability and continuity.*

## Maintaining a Human Touch

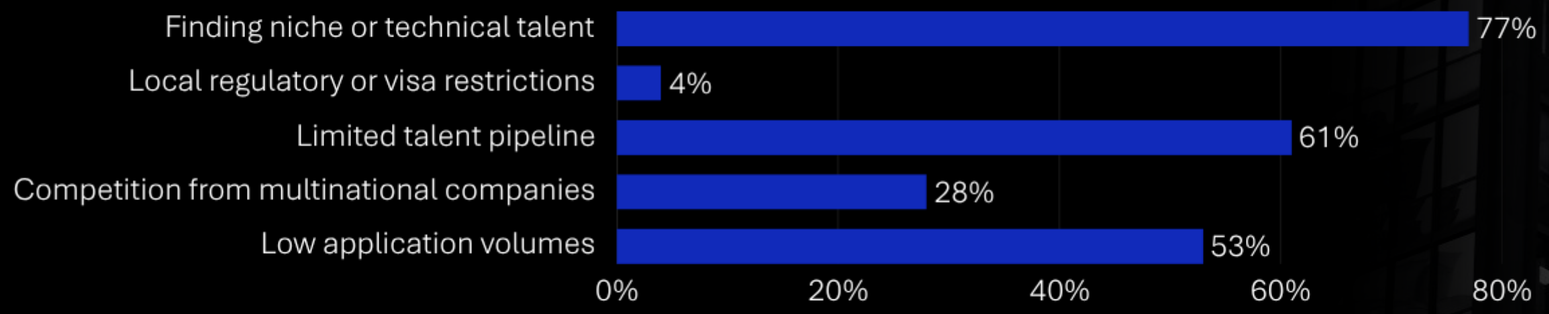
Across Thailand and Southeast Asia, organisations are rapidly adopting AI and automation to improve recruitment speed, accuracy, and scalability. While these tools are efficient, they cannot replace the empathy and trust that define successful executive hiring. In Thailand's relationship-driven business culture, candidates still expect a personal connection, especially when career decisions affect family life, relocation, or long-term development.

*Best practice: use technology to amplify, not replace, human engagement. Automate routine communication and screening to allow hiring leaders to focus on authentic interactions.*

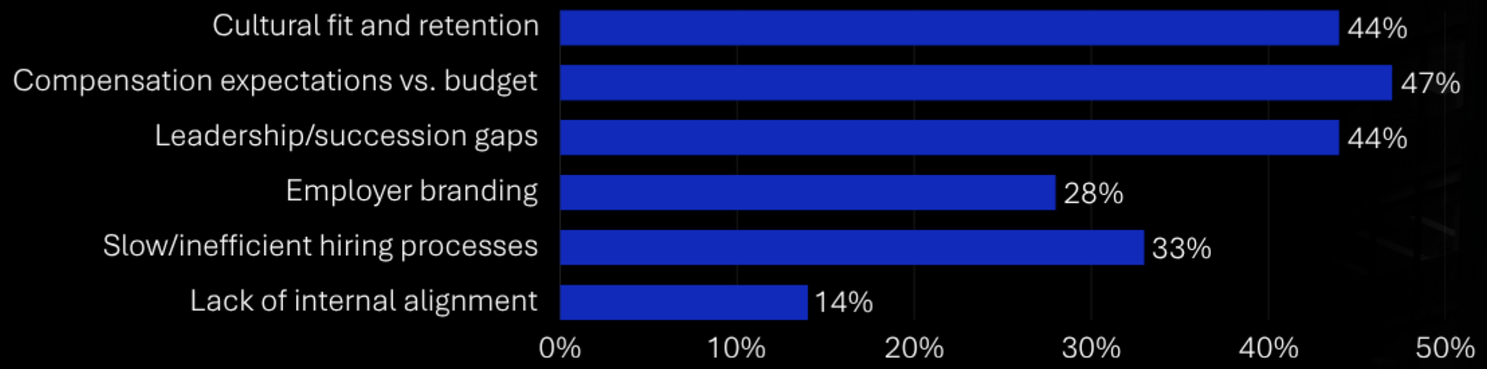
Hiring at the executive level should not be a transactional process. It is a strategic interaction that shapes brand reputation and leadership continuity. Employers and candidates are aligned on the areas that matter most but employers who design executive-centred hiring journeys will secure stronger talent and build long-term loyalty and advocacy.

# Top Hiring Challenges in Thailand

**Client Survey Q7 - What are the most significant challenges your organisation faces when recruiting externally?**




**Client Survey Q8 - What internal recruitment challenges does your organisation currently experience?**



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# What sets us apart?

At JacksonGrant Executive, we partner with clients to build high-impact leadership teams and organisational capability across Southeast Asia. In a region undergoing rapid transformation, world-class talent strategies are no longer optional, they're essential.

Founded in 2012 and headquartered in Thailand, with a presence in London and Hong Kong, we combine global standards with deep local insight to support multinational and high-growth companies in their most critical leadership and capability decisions. As the Southeast Asia partner of IIC Partners, one of the world's top 10 global executive search networks - we offer true global reach with on-the-ground execution.

We go beyond traditional search. By integrating proven methodologies with leadership development, technology, employer branding, and real-time market insight, we help clients attract, grow, and retain the leaders who drive long-term success.

Southeast Asia demands agility, precision, and a new approach to leadership hiring and development. That's where we come in.

**Global Perspectives. Local Intelligence.**

Welcome to JacksonGrant Executive.



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**Over 450 consultants established in 40 countries**

As proud members of **IIC Partners**, JacksonGrant is part of a leading global executive search and leadership consulting firm. Founded in 1988, IIC Partners connects us to a network of over 450 consultants in more than 40 offices worldwide. This collaboration enables us to leverage extensive expertise in executive search, board-level and leadership assessment, succession planning, and more.

Being part of IIC Partners amplifies our capabilities, allowing us to deliver tailored, high-quality talent solutions to diverse organisations, from global corporations to non-profits. Together, we are committed to innovative and inclusive hiring practices, helping you build dynamic, world-class teams.

# Meet Our Team



## Richard
### Jackson

Richard is Managing Director & Co-Founder of JacksonGrant, one of Southeast Asia's leading Industrial and Executive Search specialists. Richard has over 25 years of experience in client management roles and a deep understanding of the Thailand & ASEAN labor market. Richard's unparalleled network in the Manufacturing, Supply Chain, and Technology sectors extends throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.



## Dr. Larry
### Persons

Author of the groundbreaking book*, The Way Thais Lead*, Larry is a leadership development expert specialising in cultural intelligence, executive coaching, and winning the hearts of Thais in the workplace. Larry has exceptional command of the Thai language and an insider's understanding of Thai culture. He holds a PhD in Intercultural Studies and is a visiting professor of 'Culturally Intelligent Leadership' at Sasin School of Management, Chulalongkorn University



## Alexander
### Grant

Alex, a Co-founder and Partner at JacksonGrant, has cultivated an incisive understanding of labor practices and business development within the Thai landscape. With a stellar track record, Alex has demonstrated exceptional prowess in recruiting top-tier executive talent. Clients benefit from his proficiency in executive search and his extensive business consulting expertise, offering a full spectrum of strategic insights.



## Sureeporn
### Thumvachiraporn

With 20 years of experience in international recruitment, she has developed a deep understanding of changing market dynamics and evolving industry trends across Thailand and ASEAN. Her expertise spans a broad range of industries, including Retail, FMCG, Logistics, Pharmaceutical, Manufacturing, and Non-profit sectors within Finance, Law, and Human Resources

# Our Solutions



## Executive Search & Candidate Assessment

Identify superb candidates for executive positions and leverage top-flight psychometric tools to assess the best fit for roles and company culture



## Executive & Cultural Coaching

Guide your executives into greater self-awareness, powerful insights, measurable short-term goals, and behavioral change all without telling them what they must do



## Cultural Intelligence

Shorten the learning curve of cultural adjustment to life and business in Thailand & SE Asia and equip business leaders to be culturally smarter in their new roles



## Transformative Leadership

Retool your leadership to be more agile and innovative, nurturing your successors and high-potentials, and driving change through Leader as Coach initiatives

# JacksonGrant Group

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Executive Search Worldwide

- Executive Search & Assessment
- Leadership for Transformation
- Cultural Intelligence & Coaching
- Executive Value Creation



JacksonGrant

- Recruitment as a Service ™
- Scalable Project Hiring
- Exclusive & Contingency Recruitment
- Customised Talent Solutions

FORGE
STRATEGIC WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

- Talent Acquisition Process Optimisation
- Market Intelligence & Insights
- Leadership & Team Impact Analytics
- EVP & Strategic Workforce Planning

# Shaping Leadership for Thailand 2030

Thailand's workforce is entering a period of rapid transformation. New demands on executive leadership are reshaping how organisations attract and retain senior talent. Employers must prepare for rising skill shortages, shifting work models, and greater competition for leadership capability.

The priority now is to act strategically, building executive pipelines that balance local expertise with global perspective. JacksonGrant Executive partners with organisations to achieve this, delivering specialist hiring solutions that secure resilient, future-ready leadership.

JacksonGrant Executive is a trusted partner in senior-level recruitment, organisational capability building, and HR advisory, supporting multinationals and local organisations in securing the leadership talent needed to thrive in a fast-changing market. With deep expertise across Thailand and the wider region, we connect clients with executives who can drive transformation and long-term success.

**For a confidential discussion on building your executive pipeline for 2030, contact JacksonGrant Executive.**



JacksonGrant Executive

142 Two Pacific Place, 18th Floor Unit 1805, Sukhumvit Road, Klongtoey, Bangkok 10110
**Office:** +66 (0)2 653 3998
**Mobile:** +66 (0)64 157 2616
enquiries@jacksongrantexecutive.com