

HR REPORT

for Japanese Corporations in Asia

Q2
2025

>Talent Needs in Asia Countries

>People and Organization Column
'Middle Management's Involvement Is
Key to Enhancing Engagement'



▶ Talent Needs in Asia Countries

Singapore	3
Malaysia	4
Thailand	5
Indonesia	6
Vietnam	7
Philippines	8

▶ People and Organization Column

‘Middle Management’s Involvement Is Key to Enhancing Engagement ’ ...	9
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	---

PERSOL Group operates in 13 countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific, and supporting our clients’ talent needs. This report summarizes the latest job trends in each country based on around 100,000 hiring needs per year (*), which are submitted to our group in Asia-Pacific countries. We hope this report will be helpful to your organization’s growth.

※Numbers of recruitment cases in 13 countries and regions in Asia and the Pacific

Copyright(C) PERSOL Pte Ltd. All right reserved.
Reproduction and unauthorized reprinting of information
published on this report are prohibited.

Talent Needs in Asia Countries (Singapore)



The following graph shows the number of new job openings we received from Japanese and non-Japanese companies, and compares it to the same period last year, set at 100.

Please refer to the graph for the changes by quarter through the year as well as the trends in job openings in each country from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

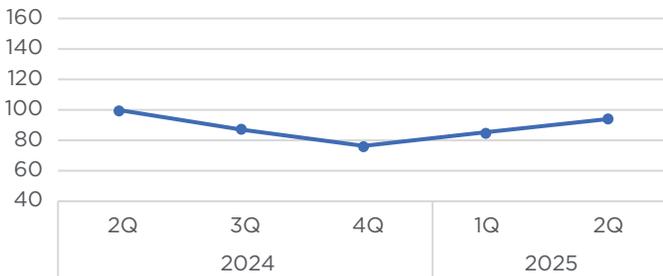
*The information has been put together based on the job openings data belonging to PERSOL's overseas subsidiaries and partner companies.

Information in each section is accurate as of the end of June 2025. For the latest trends, please contact the sales executive in charge.

Compared with the same period in the last year ▲ Significantly Increasing ↗ Gradually Increasing → Stable ↘ Slightly Decreasing ▼ Significantly Decreasing

Singapore

■ Compared with the same quarter last year ■ Compared with the previous quarter



Written by:

Amily Yoong, PERSOL Singapore

In the second quarter of 2025, Singapore continued to maintain stable economic management amid a complex mix of structural reforms and external uncertainties. The government projected annual GDP growth at 1.0–3.0%, reflecting a cautiously optimistic outlook. Meanwhile, reports indicated that workplace inefficiencies could cost up to 12.5% of GDP, highlighting the renewed importance of digital transformation and operational improvements.

In the labour market, sector-specific initiatives progressed, including workforce recovery in the aviation industry and the announcement of support measures for senior employment. Interest in flexible work arrangements and inclusive hiring practices continued to grow, with companies increasingly responsive to diverse talent needs. Although graduate employment rates showed a downward trend, salary levels remained stable, and demand for competitive talent persisted. At PERSOL Singapore, over 300 job orders were received in Q2 2025 which is around 10% lower than Q2 2024. The order introduction rate was 90%, interview rate 48%, indicating active recruitment alongside cautious client selection.

Many roles required Japanese language skills, spanning engineering, technical sales, project management, supply chain, finance, HR, and administrative functions. These positions often involve coordination with Japan headquarters, regional reporting, and client-facing responsibilities.

By industry, hiring remained strong in manufacturing and materials (chemicals, metals, precision engineering), as well as construction and civil engineering due to ongoing infrastructure projects. Steady demand was also observed in transport, logistics, IT, digital, finance, and professional services. These sectors showed a growing need for skilled professionals in technical, operational, and back-office roles.

Looking ahead, PERSOL Singapore will continue strengthening early engagement with Japanese-speaking talent, deepening relationships with existing clients, and enhancing its ability to identify and respond to new business needs. The team aims to support strategic hiring in growth areas such as carbon services, construction, and digital roles.

Talent Needs in Asia Countries (Malaysia)



The following graph shows the number of new job openings we received from Japanese and non-Japanese companies, and compares it to the same period last year, set at 100.

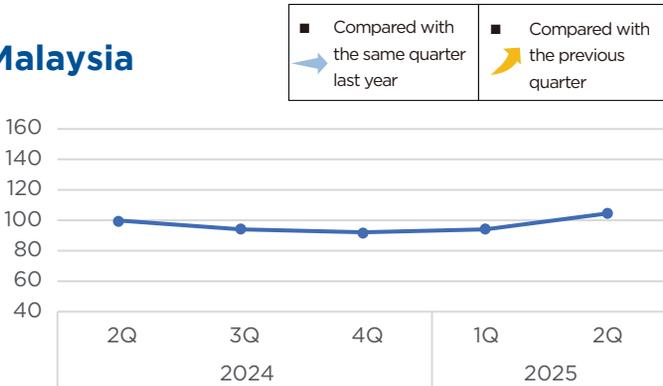
Please refer to the graph for the changes by quarter through the year as well as the trends in job openings in each country from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

*The information has been put together based on the job openings data belonging to PERSOL's overseas subsidiaries and partner companies.

Information in each section is accurate as of the end of June 2025. For the latest trends, please contact the sales executive in charge.

Compared with the same period in the last year Significantly Increasing Gradually Increasing Stable Slightly Decreasing Significantly Decreasing

Malaysia



Written by:

Ryoko Kitasaka, PERSOL Malaysia

According to Bank Negara Malaysia, the Malaysian economy grew by 4.4% year-on-year in Q1 2025. This growth was primarily driven by robust domestic demand, supported by a strong labor market and income-related policies such as minimum wage hikes and civil servant salary increases, which helped sustain household spending.

From January to May 2025, Malaysia's manufactured goods exports rose by 7.1% year-on-year to RM550.51 billion, with strong performance in electrical & electronics (E&E), machinery & equipment, and processed food. Agricultural exports also increased by 10.5% to RM44.24 billion, mainly due to higher shipments of palm oil and related products. In contrast, mineral exports declined by 17.9% to RM38.47 billion, due to reduced shipments of crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The unemployment rate dropped to 3.0% in April 2025, the lowest in a decade, as employment growth outpaced labor force growth for 45 consecutive months. In May, there were 134,600 job openings, including 12,000 for unskilled labor. The average unemployment rate for 2025 is projected to be around 3.1%.

From April to June 2025, there were 193 job openings, marking a 15% increase year-on-year. While job postings in the manufacturing sector showed a slight decline due to rising labor costs, Japanese companies maintained steady hiring demand. On the job seeker side, applications via social media surpassed those from traditional sources such as local newspapers or company websites. The ease of applying with a simple message, without the need to write formal business emails, has become a key factor influencing job seekers today.

Among Japanese job seekers, many residing in Malaysia and working in BPO roles are now seeking new opportunities as their projects conclude. Additionally, due to stricter work visa conditions and higher living costs in Singapore, there is a noticeable trend of Japanese professionals relocating from Singapore to Malaysia.

On May 24, PERSOL hosted a joint online career seminar for Japanese job seekers across five countries, attracting over 40 participants. The two-hour session covered local living conditions and the latest job market updates in Malaysia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Attendees included young professionals eager to work abroad and early retirees from Japan seeking second careers overseas.

PERSOL Malaysia remains committed to connecting local talent and Japanese job seekers with Japanese companies operating in Malaysia.

Talent Needs in Asia Countries (Thailand)



The following graph shows the number of new job openings we received from Japanese and non-Japanese companies, and compares it to the same period last year, set at 100.

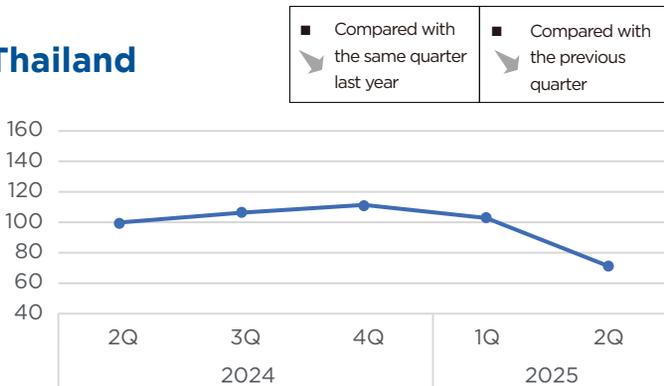
Please refer to the graph for the changes by quarter through the year as well as the trends in job openings in each country from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

*The information has been put together based on the job openings data belonging to PERSOL's overseas subsidiaries and partner companies.

Information in each section is accurate as of the end of June 2025. For the latest trends, please contact the sales executive in charge.

Compared with the same period in the last year Significantly Increasing Gradually Increasing Stable Slightly Decreasing Significantly Decreasing

Thailand



Written by:

Yuko Otsuka, PERSOL Thailand

On July 3, the World Bank announced a significant downward revision of Thailand's 2025 economic growth forecast, from 2.9% (as projected in February) to 1.8%. Similarly, the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking (JSCCIB), which comprises Thailand's three major economic organizations, also revised its GDP forecast for 2025 on June 4, lowering it from the previous month's estimate of 2.0%–2.2% to 1.5%–2.0%.

This sharp downgrade is attributed to several factors: a slowdown in exports due to U.S. tariffs, a 15% year-on-year drop in tourist arrivals in June, and a 4.56% decline in total tourist numbers from January to June compared to the same period last year. Additionally, political unrest—such as protests demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Paetongtarn—has delayed the implementation of economic stimulus budgets.

Amid these headwinds of political instability and slowing economic growth, the government is attempting to respond through proactive employment policies and institutional reforms. However, challenges remain, including addressing an aging population, closing the skills gap, and adapting to digital transformation.

At PERSOL Thailand, the number of job openings supported during Q2 2025 (April–June) dropped significantly: down 8% from the previous quarter and 24% year-on-year. However, the number of hires exceeded the previous year's figures. While companies are cautious about posting new job openings, they continue to selectively hire for essential positions. Among Japanese companies, there was strong demand for IT roles in manufacturing, local talent who speak Japanese, locally hired Japanese nationals, and customer service roles requiring Chinese language skills.

Businesses targeting the middle-class consumer segment—both Japanese and non-Japanese—also showed expansion. In particular, the retail sector saw aggressive store expansion by existing companies and new market entries. PERSOL Thailand also participated in the "JOB EXPO THAILAND 2025" hosted by the Ministry of Labour from June 6 to 8. The event attracted 500,000 domestic job listings and 100,000 overseas listings, with a total of 80,000 visitors. Retail companies were the main focus of the expo. While the outlook for tourism and domestic consumption remains uncertain, the expo gave the impression that there is no need for excessive pessimism.

If the proposed economic stimulus package (in total approximately 115 billion baht) is approved, it is expected to support the economy in the second half of the year. However, due to ongoing issues such as U.S. tariffs and domestic political turmoil (including coalition conflicts and pressure on the Prime Minister to resign), hiring decisions are expected to remain polarized. In this uncertain environment, it is becoming increasingly important for Japanese companies—who traditionally take time in hiring decisions—to make faster, more localized decisions in order to secure top talent.

Talent Needs in Asia Countries (Indonesia)



The following graph shows the number of new job openings we received from Japanese and non-Japanese companies, and compares it to the same period last year, set at 100.

Please refer to the graph for the changes by quarter through the year as well as the trends in job openings in each country from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

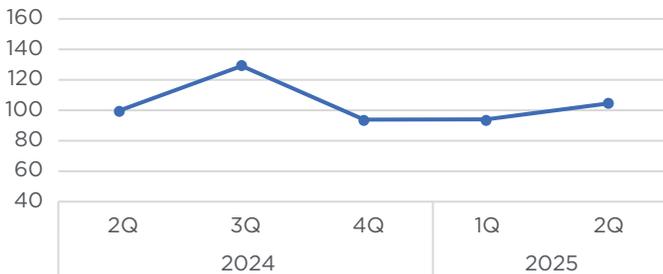
*The information has been put together based on the job openings data belonging to PERSOL's overseas subsidiaries and partner companies.

Information in each section is accurate as of the end of June 2025. For the latest trends, please contact the sales executive in charge.

Compared with the same period in the last year Significantly Increasing Gradually Increasing Stable Slightly Decreasing Significantly Decreasing

Indonesia

■ Compared with the same quarter last year
 ■ Compared with the previous quarter



Written by:

Junpei Miyata, PERSOL Indonesia

In the January–March 2025 period, Indonesia's real GDP growth rate was 4.87% year-on-year, marking a slowdown from 5.02% in the previous quarter (October–December 2024). This deceleration was primarily due to slower private consumption, reduced government spending, and weaker investment growth amid global uncertainties.

Focusing on the labor market, the unemployment rate improved more than expected, dropping from 4.91% in August 2024 to 4.76% in February 2025. However, urban areas still face higher unemployment at 5.73%, compared to 3.33% in non-urban areas. According to Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics, while the unemployment rate shows improvement, the absolute number of unemployed people has increased year-on-year due to a significant rise in the labor force population. From the job seekers' perspective, especially among fresh graduates and early-career professionals, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find employment domestically. As a result, more students are looking abroad for job opportunities, as working overseas offers better financial rewards and career development prospects.

According to a survey by PERSOL Research and Consulting, the think tank of the PERSOL Group, Japan ranks first among preferred countries for employment, followed by the United States, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. The top reasons for choosing Japan include:

1. Opportunity to learn advanced technologies
2. Higher salary levels
3. Positive impact on long-term career development

Japan is projected to face a labor shortage of approximately 10 million workers by 2040, making foreign talent acquisition a critical solution. Beyond simply filling labor gaps, hiring foreign workers also brings innovation and supports global business expansion, offering significant strategic advantages.

Regarding Indonesia's domestic hiring market, new job postings from April to June 2025 remained robust, reaching 105.6% of the previous quarter and 106.9% year-on-year. Due to the high fluidity of the Indonesian labor market, many job openings are for replacement hires, with a notable increase in positions requiring Japanese language skills. This trend is partly driven by the growing number of Indonesians taking jobs in Japan, leading to more resignations from domestic companies. Additionally, the expansion of consumer-facing businesses is fueling demand for sales and marketing roles.

At PERSOL Indonesia, we have a team of highly specialized consultants who can support a wide range of hiring needs. Please feel free to reach out to us for assistance.

Available Services: Recruitment, Employment Outsourcing, Labor Management, HR Systems, Training, etc.

Talent Needs in Asia Countries (Vietnam)



The following graph shows the number of new job openings we received from Japanese and non-Japanese companies, and compares it to the same period last year, set at 100.

Please refer to the graph for the changes by quarter through the year as well as the trends in job openings in each country from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

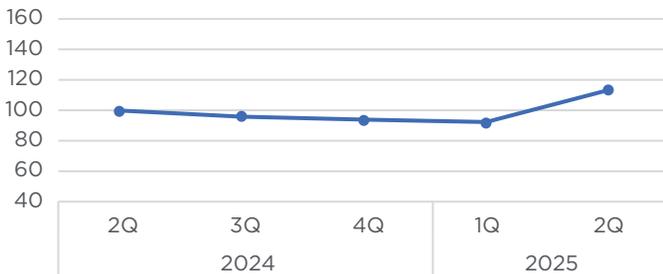
*The information has been put together based on the job openings data belonging to PERSOL's overseas subsidiaries and partner companies.

Information in each section is accurate as of the end of June 2025. For the latest trends, please contact the sales executive in charge.

Compared with the same period in the last year Significantly Increasing Gradually Increasing Stable Slightly Decreasing Significantly Decreasing

Vietnam

■ Compared with the same quarter last year
 ■ Compared with the previous quarter



Written by:

Kento Ishikawa, PERSOL Vietnam

On July 1, Vietnam implemented a new administrative structure across 34 provinces and cities, down from the previous 63. This strategic reorganization marks a new phase in the country's political and administrative reform. The government emphasized that the restructuring is a necessary step in the context of globalization, digital transformation, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Its goal is to build a unified, streamlined, and highly effective administrative system, and to realize a modern and innovative governance model that serves the people.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that if global protectionist measures such as tariff hikes are introduced from Q3 2025, Vietnam's real GDP growth could slow to +5.4% for the year, with continued weakness expected into 2026. However, the IMF also noted that easing trade tensions could significantly improve the country's economic outlook.

A report titled Vietnam AI Economy 2025, jointly released by the National Innovation Center (NIC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Boston Consulting Group (BCG), highlighted that the AI industry is expected to become a core driver of economic growth. By 2040, AI is projected to contribute between USD 120–130 billion (approximately ¥17.2–18.6 trillion) to Vietnam's GDP. AI is considered a top priority in digital transformation efforts by governments and major corporations worldwide. Vietnam's digital economy is among the fastest-growing in Southeast Asia, with an average annual growth rate of +20%. Growth driven by AI is expected to come from increased consumption, sales, and productivity, offering a key opportunity for policymakers and businesses to elevate Vietnam's position in the global digital economy.

Experts identified three pillars to support the development of Vietnam's AI economy:

Expanding AI adoption in both public and private sectors, and strengthening public-private partnerships through leading enterprise programs.

Supporting the development of a competitive AI ecosystem domestically and internationally through funding and startup promotion.

Developing AI talent through internationally standardized bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, along with large-scale training initiatives.

Due to economic uncertainty, PERSOL Vietnam saw a significant drop in job orders during April–June 2025, with total demand from both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi falling to 85% compared to the same period last year. Nevertheless, inquiries from Japanese companies considering new market entry in both cities remain strong, and recruitment continues actively for both Vietnamese and Japanese candidates.

Talent Needs in Asia Countries (Philippines)



The following graph shows the number of new job openings we received from Japanese and non-Japanese companies, and compares it to the same period last year, set at 100.

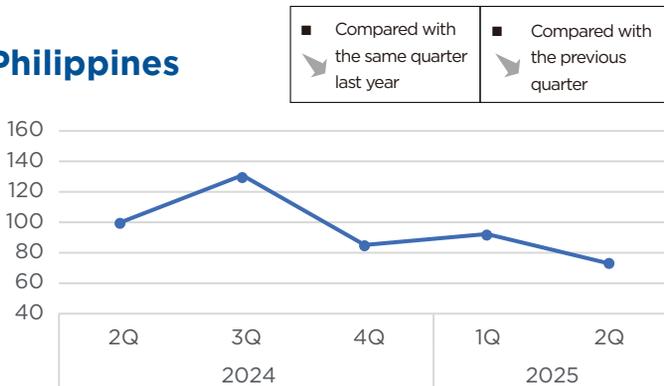
Please refer to the graph for the changes by quarter through the year as well as the trends in job openings in each country from the previous quarter and the same period last year.

*The information has been put together based on the job openings data belonging to PERSOL's overseas subsidiaries and partner companies.

Information in each section is accurate as of the end of June 2025. For the latest trends, please contact the sales executive in charge.

Compared with the same period in the last year Significantly Increasing Gradually Increasing Stable Slightly Decreasing Significantly Decreasing

Philippines



Written by:

Ayahito Takayama, PERSOL Philippines

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that the Consumer Price Index (CPI, 2018=100) in June 2025 rose by 1.4% year-on-year, slightly accelerating from 1.3% in the previous month. Rising fuel prices due to geopolitical risks in the Middle East pushed overall inflation upward, while food price increases moderated. By region, inflation in the National Capital Region (NCR) accelerated to 2.6%, whereas inflation in areas outside NCR (AONCR) slowed to 1.1%. The national core inflation rate remained steady at 2.2% for the third consecutive month.

Against this inflationary backdrop, the government announced a ₱50 daily minimum wage increase in NCR starting July 18, raising it to ₱695 (approximately JPY 1,775). The rate for agriculture and small-scale services sectors was also raised to ₱658, expected to impact around 1.2 million workers. This is the largest wage hike ever implemented in NCR and marks the fourth consecutive year of wage increases. Meanwhile, a bill proposing a nationwide ₱200 wage hike remains stalled in Congress.

According to the May 2025 Labor Force Survey, the labor force participation rate rose to 65.8%, with the labor force reaching a record 52.32 million. The employment rate improved to 96.1%, and the unemployment rate continued to decline to 3.9%. By industry, employment expanded in services, particularly in wholesale and retail, accommodation, and food service sectors, while manufacturing and construction showed declines. Wage and salary workers accounted for 62.8% of total employment, about 80% of whom worked in private companies. The average weekly hours worked declined slightly to 39.8 hours, and while underemployment rose to 13.1% year-on-year, it improved from the previous month.

In trade, exports in May surged 15.1% year-on-year, led by robust demand for electronics and frontloading driven by efforts to avoid U.S. tariffs. Imports fell 4.4%, mainly due to a decline in mineral fuel imports. As a result, the trade deficit shrank by over 30%, contributing to fiscal stabilization. Reflecting these trends, the government downgraded its 2025 real GDP growth forecast from 6.0–7.0% to 5.5–6.5%.

These developments directly impact Japanese companies operating in the Philippines, requiring them to reassess hiring strategies, manage labor costs carefully, and optimize production locations. In particular, the continuous rise in minimum wages, inflation pressures, and sector-specific employment trends call for a thorough review of labor strategies.

PERSOL Philippines remains committed to supporting Japanese companies through precise recruitment services and labor consulting, helping them achieve stable and sustainable business operations in this evolving environment.



Middle Management's Involvement Is Key to Enhancing Engagement

The Essence of Engagement: Feeling Like a Member of the Team

In the previous column, we discussed that the essence of engagement lies in a balanced state where the mutual expectations between the organization and employees are aligned. Organizations expect employees to fulfill roles and deliver results, while employees seek opportunities for career development and a positive work environment. This equilibrium is what fosters a high level of engagement and employee initiative.

According to a global survey by the ADP Research Institute, this balance stems from the feeling of being “a member of the team.”

This sense of belonging is created by two key elements:

Self-efficacy: The feeling that one's efforts contribute to the team's success

Recognition and acknowledgment: The assurance that these contributions are recognized by team members

Teamwork is not just about group tasks—it's about choosing the most productive methods to achieve goals. This requires mutual understanding of each member's strengths and assigning roles that allow individuals to excel. As a result, self-efficacy and recognition emerge, engagement is fostered, and diverse abilities combine to create new value. This is the ideal state for a team.

The Importance and Challenge of Role Clarity

As mentioned, clear individual roles (assignments) are crucial for team performance. This is especially true in Asia, where role clarity can significantly impact outcomes.

Example from overseas restaurant expansion: The Japanese

“multi-skilled worker” model is difficult to replicate abroad. By breaking down tasks and assigning specific roles to part-time staff, stable operations are achieved. This eliminates ambiguity and ensures clear assignments.

Chinese soccer (as noted by Fujitsu Research Institute's Mr. Ke Long):

While China excels in individual sports like table tennis, it struggles in team sports like soccer. Team sports require players to adapt their roles flexibly during play. Over-reliance on detailed instructions or rigid role adherence hampers team adaptability. Chinese individuals tend to prefer clearly defined roles and individual recognition, which may explain the weaker performance in team sports. This trend is likely similar across ASEAN countries.

However, in business contexts, it's difficult to define roles with absolute clarity. Employee initiative is essential, and high engagement allows talented individuals to fully demonstrate their capabilities.

Middle Management as the Key Players

The key to solving this challenge lies in middle management (managers and supervisors). They serve as both the starting point and endpoint of engagement formation.

The balanced state of mutual expectations between the organization and employees doesn't occur naturally. It requires a deliberate and ongoing mediation. Middle managers must fulfill the following roles:

Understand employee expectations: Grasp each member's career aspirations and sources of motivation

Communicate organizational expectations: Clearly convey team goals and individual roles

Provide recognition and feedback: Evaluate contributions



People and Organization Column: Elements That Give Rise to Engagement



and provide specific feedback

Neglecting this process leads employees to fill gaps between job demands and personal expectations through their own interpretations, often resulting in misunderstandings or dissatisfaction. This can lead to unfortunate comments from executives like “employees only respond to money.” The absolute starting point is understanding employee expectations. From there, managers must communicate organizational goals and provide recognition to maintain balanced expectations.

Systems Companies Should Implement for Expectation Alignment

To make middle management’s mediation role sustainable, companies should institutionalize it through systems—not rely solely on individual capabilities or effort.

A good example is Levi’s “Celebrating Failure” initiative: “When a subordinate reports a failure, the manager first expresses appreciation for the report.”

This simple rule has a significant impact. It encourages early reporting of issues, fosters collaboration between managers and subordinates, prevents a culture of concealment, and enhances psychological safety. It helps shape the desired organizational culture.

Such systems not only promote alignment between management and frontline expectations but also cultivate a culture of learning from failure and valuing honest reporting. Ultimately, this creates a virtuous cycle that respects employee initiative and enhances engagement.



Hiroaki Ide

Director of Organizational Development
PERSOLKELLY Consulting

Hiroaki Ide is a seasoned HR consultant with over 10 years of experience in human resource management across Japan, Greater China, and Southeast Asia, he has been involved in designing HR systems for various industries. He also has prior experience as an in-house HR professional at a listed company, where he led strategic HR initiatives such as HR system development and talent selection planning. In addition, he has published multiple HR-related columns in finance industry publications.

He began his career as a national public servant after graduating from the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo. He then held HR leadership roles at a major display industry company and worked as a senior consultant at Mizuho Research & Technologies. In 2017, he joined PERSOL Consulting and relocated to the Shanghai office in 2021.



PERSOL Singapore

PERSOL Singapore Pte Ltd.

50 RAFFLES PLACE, #07-01 SINGAPORE LAND TOWER,
SINGAPORE 048623

TEL: +65-6709-3388

✉ : info@persolsg.com

PERSOL Thailand

PERSOL HR Services Recruitment (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

21st Floor, Bangkok City Tower, Unit 2101-02, 179 South
Sathorn Road, Thungmahamek, Sathorn, Bangkok 10120,
Thailand

TEL: +(662)-670-0505

✉ : persolthjpdesk@Persolth.com

PERSOL Vietnam

PERSOL Vietnam Co., Ltd.

18th floor, SONATUS, 15 Le Thanh Ton Street, District 1, Ho Chi
Minh City, Vietnam

TEL: +84-(0)28-73039100

✉ : persolvjpdesk@persolvietnam.com

PERSOL Malaysia

Agensi Pekerjaan PERSOL Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

Level 19, Menara AIA Sentral, No. 30 Jalan Sultan Ismail,
50250 Kuala Lumpur

TEL: +603-2203-0808

✉ : persolmyjpdesk@persolmy.com

PERSOL Indonesia

PT PERSOL Recruitment Indonesia

Mayapada Tower 1, 6th Floor, Suite 06-01, Jl. Jend. Sudirman
Kav 28, Jakarta 12920

TEL: +(62)-21-521-1873

✉ : info@persolid.com

PERSOL Philippines

JOHNCLEMENTS. RECRUITMENT, INC. – Japan Desk |

PERSOL PHILIPPINES

14F LKG Tower, 6801 Ayala Ave., Bel-Air, Makati City, Metro
Manila Philippines 1209

TEL: +(632) 8884-1227/8991-1400

✉ : info@persolid.com