



# Generation Y: Comparison between Asia and the rest of the World

Highlights from the global 'Tell it how it is' Research 2008

The highlights in this document have been taken from the **talentsmoothie** 'Global Tell is how it is'  
Summary Research Report, Asia

Copyright © 2008 by Justine James, Sally Bibb, Simon Walker. All rights reserved.

None of these highlights may be used or reproduced in any manner without full reference to the full  
research report title i.e. **talentsmoothie** 'Global Tell is how it is' Summary Research Report 2008, Asia

This research report may be purchased. For information contact Justine James at  
[justinejames@talentsmoothie.com](mailto:justinejames@talentsmoothie.com) or call 020 7127 4741 or write to  
**talentsmoothie** Ltd, 32 London Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 1JX

[www.talentsmoothie.com](http://www.talentsmoothie.com)

November 2008

Designed by

**BERNARD HODES** GROUP

# Highlights from the talentsmoothie 'Global Tell it how it is' Summary Research Report 2008, Asia

Increasingly, more global organisations are sourcing their talent from Asia, and until now there has been little data available comparing Gen Ys in Asia with those in the rest of the world. This data is extremely valuable to those organisations who recruit Gen Ys across different territories. Our research shows that while there are similarities in attitudes and values world-wide there are some subtle and not-so-subtle differences. Understanding these differences will help organisations to hone their attraction and selection campaigns and improve engagement and retention.

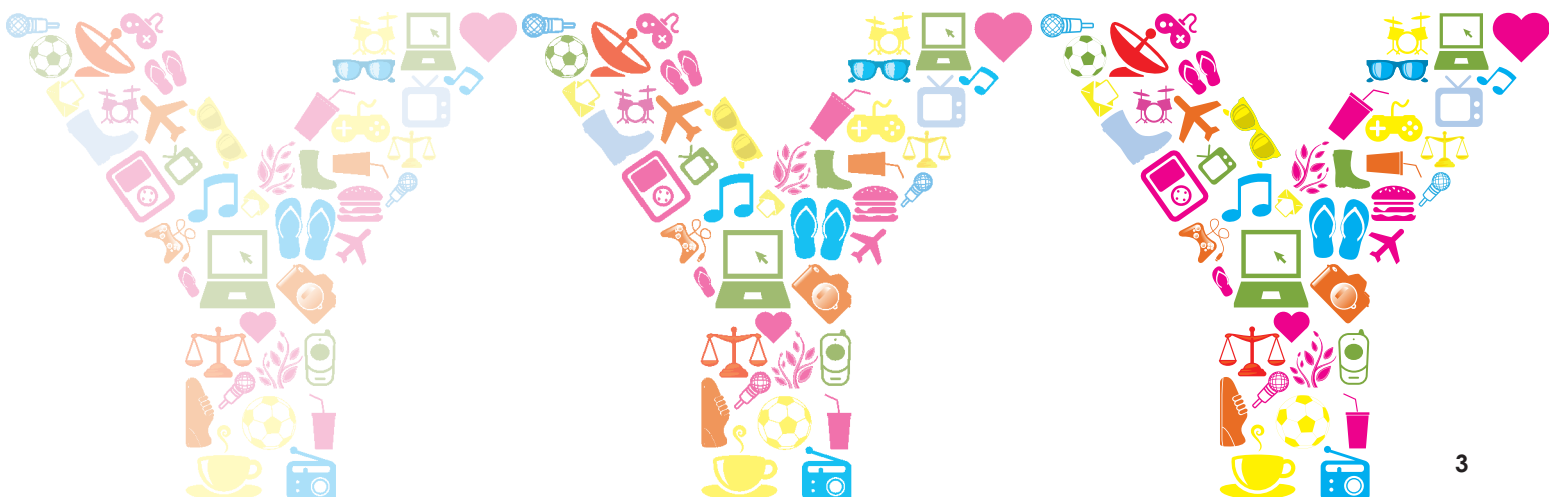
## Key Findings

### The similarities

- The top four things Gen Ys are looking for from an employer are the same the world over:
  - Having the chance to learn and develop.
  - The opportunity to do work that excites them.
  - Having a job aligned to their talents.
  - Having a mentor at work.
- Good managers who understand them and trust them are essential. This is one of the main reasons Gen Y leave organisations where-ever they are in the world.
- Being trusted is the key to keeping this generation motivated and engaged at work. This is undoubtedly more important during times of economic downturn as people become more insecure about their jobs and concerned about changes that may happen in their organisations.

### The differences

- Asia-based Gen Ys key influencers are different. Our research shows that in the Western world Gen Ys look firstly to parents and then peers and mentors. In Asia peers and parents are viewed as equally important. But there are differences when we look more specifically by country. For example in China after parents, members of the older generation are the next most influential. Peers, mentors and the media come next. In India after parents, academics are the most influential. Understanding these differences can be enormously helpful when planning marketing campaigns and knowing who to target other than Gen Ys themselves.
- The company brand is far more important to Gen Ys in Asia than it is to Gen Ys elsewhere. They are much more likely to be turned on and off an organisation based on what they hear in the news or how it is portrayed by friends and family.
- Gen Ys in Asia have different industry likes and dislikes to Gen Ys in the rest of the world. This is an example of generational theory in action. The differences in experiences and conditions create different preferences. Asia-based Gen Ys dislike of defence is a lot less strong than that felt by their counterparts in the rest of the world. This is likely to be because the Asian countries are not sending troops to Iraq and therefore there is less media coverage and negative feeling. Knowing how an industry is perceived is the first stage in understanding how hard you will need to work to overcome any perception barriers.



- Lack of support and poor management are the main reasons for Asia-based Gen Ys leaving employment, whereas in the rest of the world the two most common reasons are work is not motivating and for better work/life balance. Asia-based Gen Ys told us that having access to mentors was very important to them. While this is also important to Gen Ys in the rest of the world our research shows that this is more of a deal breaker in Asia.
- There has been much debate about the loyalty of Gen Ys to employers. Our research shows that Gen Ys are loyal as long as they are getting what they need. They expect not to get their job choice right first time but they are much more likely to stay longer - perhaps 5 years or more - in their second job. In Asia however, there is less loyalty second time round. They are much more likely to leave if they think it's taking too long to get promoted. This links with their greater need to understand their career path than their counterparts in the rest of the world.
- Asia-based Gen Ys have a stronger view that they are different from their older co-workers. 53% of Asia-based Gen Ys as opposed to 43% in the rest of the world feel they are different to older co-workers. Enabling the workforce to understand generational diversity - why people from different generations act and think the way they do - can go a long way to alleviating potential inter-generational conflict and increase the productivity of teams.
- Having access to social networking sites was low down the priority list for Asia-based Gen Ys but they still rated it more important to them than Gen Ys elsewhere. Being connected technologically at work was also a much bigger deal for Asia-based Gen Ys.

“The younger Generation thinks about opportunities but the old Generation thinks about security”

“The motivation is different. Gen X-ers work mostly to earn their keep, feed their families. Gen Y-ers expect job satisfaction as we are taught in school that job satisfaction is very important.”

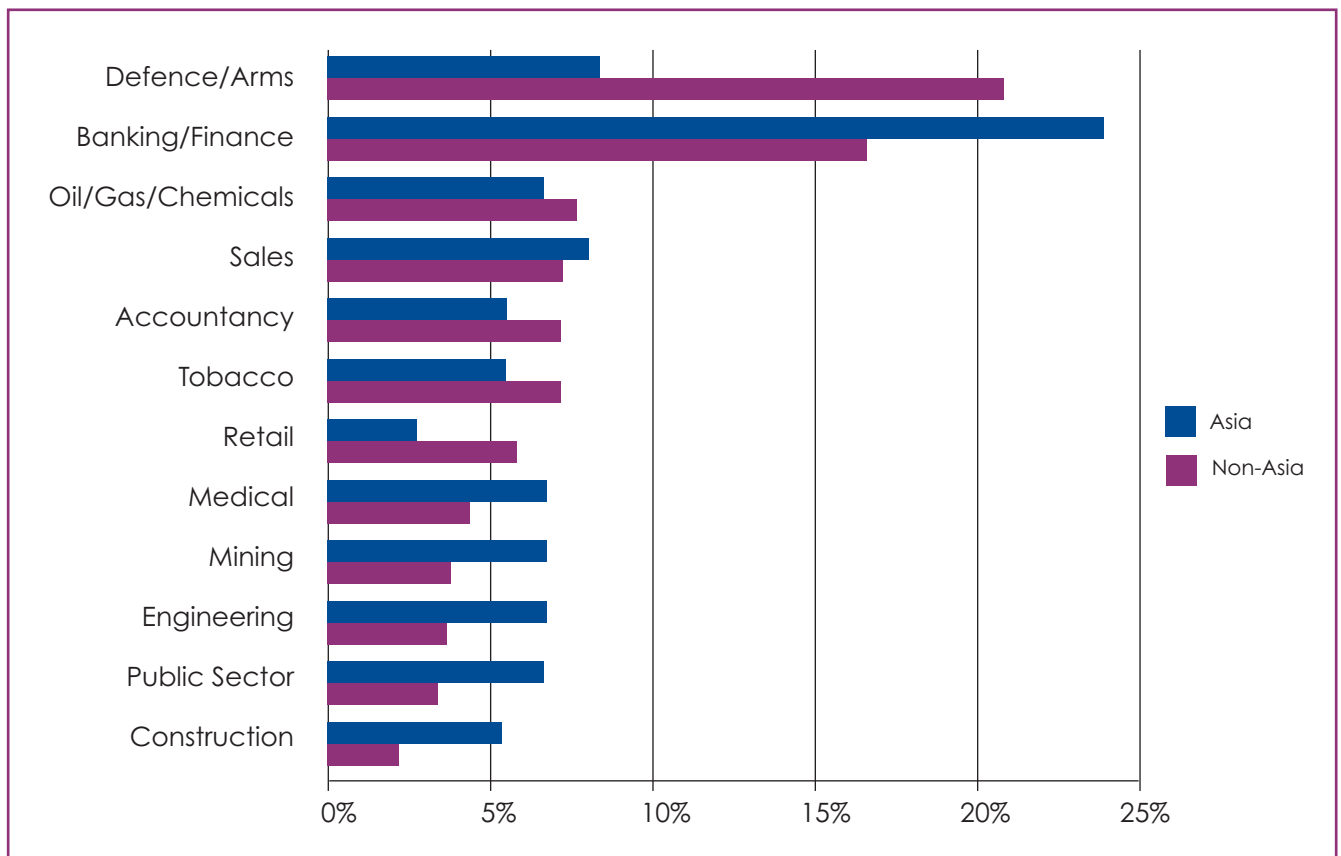


## Industry sectors/professions liked and disliked

Understanding how Gen Y feels about your industry/profession is a good starting point as it will give you some idea of what you'll need to do to attract them. While only 26% of respondents said there was an industry they would definitely not work for, if you are one of these industries it's worth knowing as you'll need to work harder.

It is possible that the credit crunch of late 2008 is the cause of such a strong dislike amongst Asia Gen Ys of the banking sector. In contrast, fewer Asia Gen Ys have a strong dislike of the defence industry. This is most probably explained by the fact that the Asian countries are not sending troops to Iraq and therefore there is less media coverage and negative feeling.

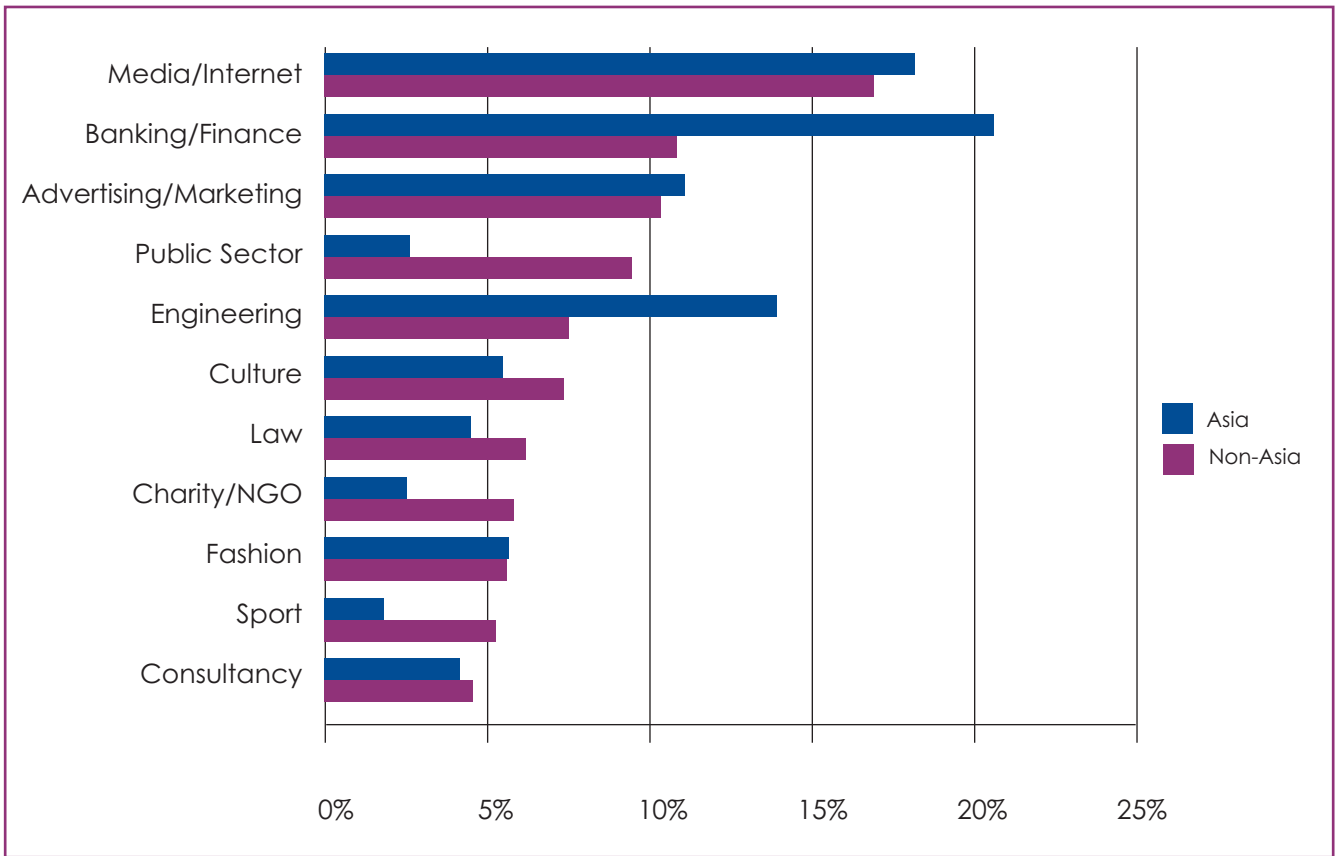
### Industry sectors/professions Gen Y would not work for\*



\*those that expressed a clear preference

66% of Asia-based Gen Ys did have a strong preference on sectors they would love to work in.

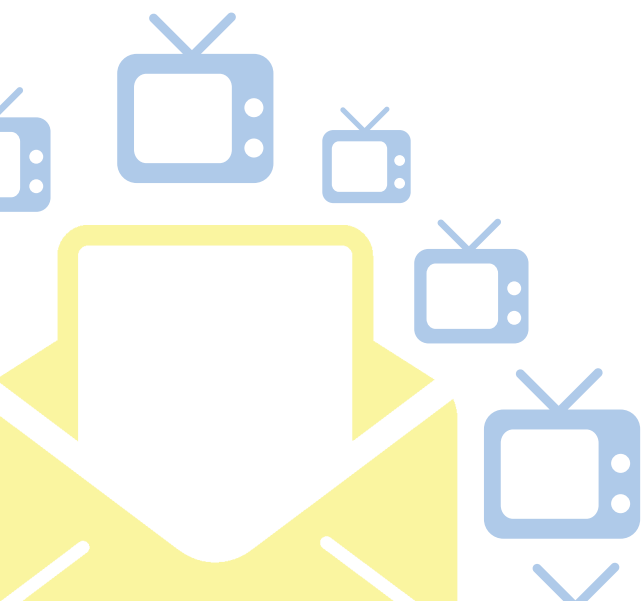
## Industry sectors/professionals Gen Y would love to work for\*



\*those who expressed a clear preference

There is a similar trend with banking and finance for both Asia and the rest of the world respondents. It scores highly in both the 'loved' and 'hated' categories. That means there are some who would love to work in the sector and some who would not – this underlines the importance of understanding your own Gen Ys and not making the mistake of generalising. For Asia banking and finance is the top choice in both 'loved' and 'hated' categories. It is slightly more disliked overall.

One of the most notable differences is how much more strongly engineering is viewed as a career of choice in Asia. This is backed up by the increasing number of quality engineering qualifications on offer in this part of the world and why many engineering companies invest heavily in recruiting there.



## What is important to Gen Y when they are looking for an employer?

The answer to this is important for any recruiter to know. It is an area that has been well researched. However, what is less understood is whether Gen Ys across the world are looking for the same things. This information is gold dust to those recruiters with wider geographical remits. It means that they can tailor their recruitment strategies according to the market they are working in.

The data suggests there are similarities between what Asia-based Gen Ys want and what Gen Ys in the rest of the world want but there are some subtle differences such as:

- The importance placed on the opportunity to work globally. This is more important to Asia-based Gen Ys than having flexible working.
  - The company brand is much more important for Asia-based Gen Ys. This means that they are more likely to turn on and off an industry/company based on good or bad publicity.
  - Asia-based Gen Ys key influencers are different. Our research shows that in the rest of the world Gen Ys look firstly to parents and then peers and mentors. In Asia peers and parents are viewed as equally important. But there are differences when we look more specifically by country. For example in China after parents, members of the older generation are the next most influential. Peers, mentors and the media come next. In India after parents, academics are the most influential. Understanding these differences can be enormously helpful when planning marketing campaigns and knowing who to target other than the graduates themselves. See our case study on page 12.
- There is a theme coming out in our research around Asia-based Gen Ys wanting support and access to senior teams. They are much more likely to leave an organisation if this is not provided.
  - While allowed access to social networking sites at work is low on their list of priorities, they feel more strongly about having this than their non Asia counterparts.
  - Asia-based Gen Ys appear less loyal than Gen Ys in the rest of the world and are even more likely to vote with their feet.

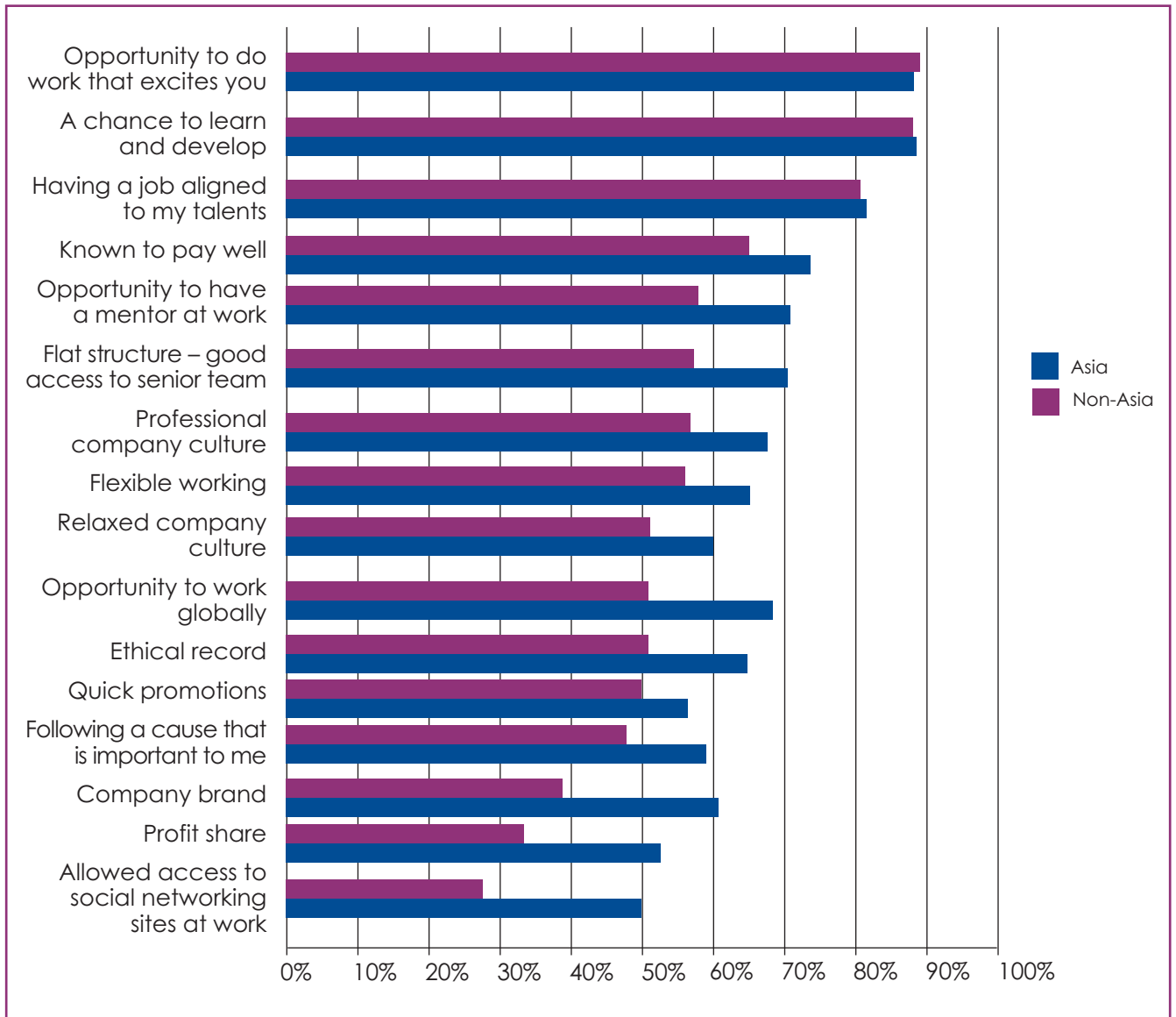
The top four things Gen Ys want from an employer appear to be the same the world over and they are:

- Having a chance to learn and develop
- The opportunity to do work that excites them
- Having a job aligned to their talents
- Mentoring

But let's not ignore the issue of money. Gen Ys are attracted to organisations that are known to pay well. It's fourth on the list for all Gen Ys but slightly more important to those in Asia. It is important not to overlook this as there is a lot of talk about Gen Ys being more interested in a company's corporate social responsibility record. To some extent this generation are used to having things and therefore money is more of a given – it feels less important as they've never really known life without it. If you apply this to the work environment then the same applies, if the money is there they can focus on those factors that make a real difference to them.



## What is important to Gen Y when choosing an employer?



“ What we want is to use our talents doing work we love. That’s way more important to us than money. ”

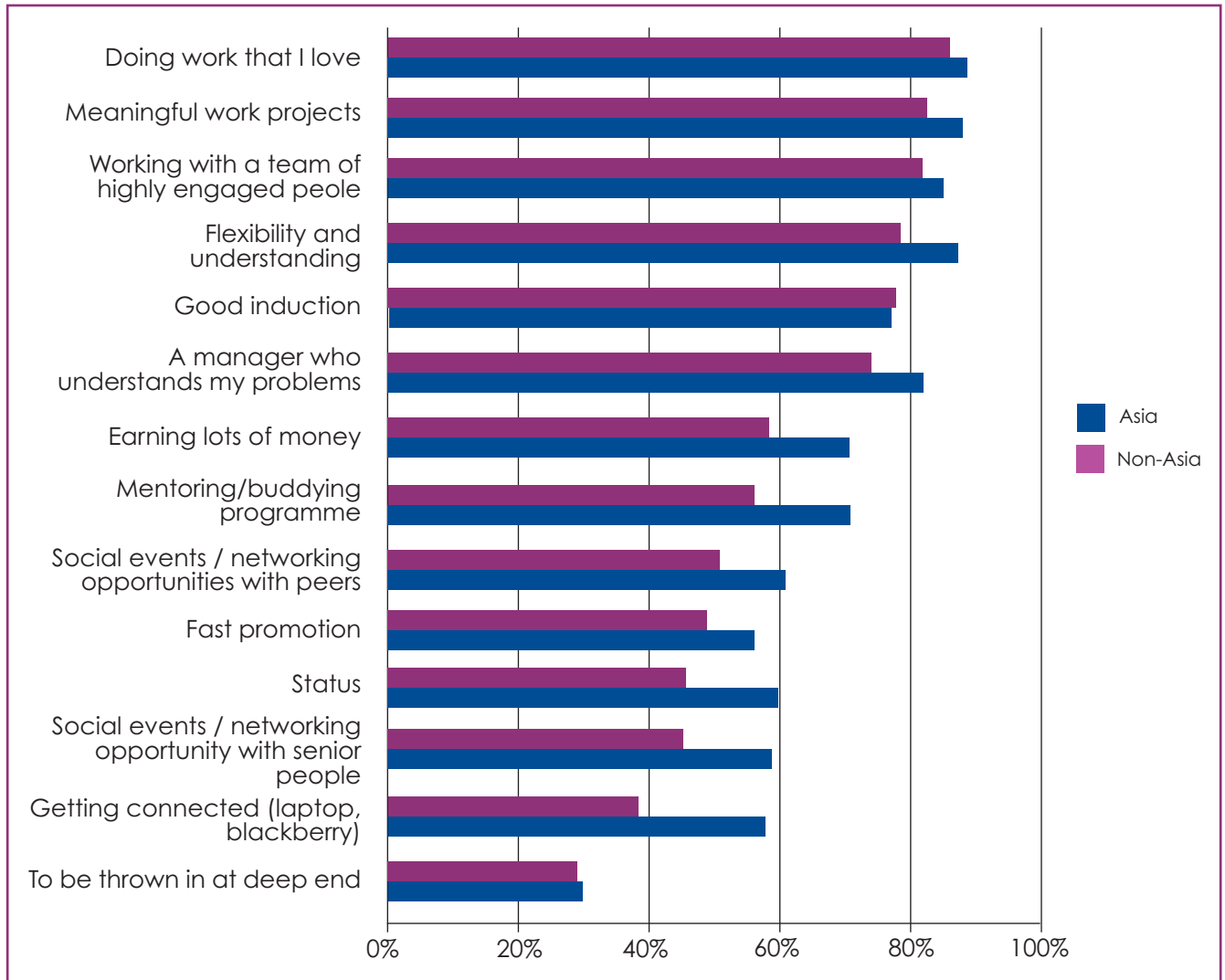


## What Gen Ys want from an employer once they join

Asia-based Gen Ys told us that lack of support was the main reason for leaving an employer. This was closely followed by poor management. So looking at what's important to them when starting a new job it's not surprising to see that "having a manager who understands me" is high on their list. Having a

mentor is also more important to Asia-based Gen Ys than it is for their counterparts and backs up this need for support which if they don't get they will leave. Having managers that are understanding and allow flexibility is important to all Gen Ys but more so to Asia-based Gen Ys.

## What is important to Gen Y when starting a new job?



“ I want to enjoy my work; to feel that what I am doing is meaningful, to be on fast track to responsibilities and promotion with ample learning and creative opportunities. ”

## The research - facts and figures

The research was conducted between August and October 2008 via an online questionnaire on the [talentsmoothie](http://talentsmoothie.com) research website: [www.tellithowitis.com](http://www.tellithowitis.com). 682 Asia-based Gen Ys completed a 26-question survey. Many also gave qualitative responses.

This report compares the views of Gen Ys in 12 Asian countries with our existing data collected from Gen Ys in the rest of the world.

The comparisons yield interesting data but there is a note of caution. There are differences in responses in the different countries. We have documented some of these differences here in this Highlights report and in the main 'Global tell it how it is' Summary Research Report Asia. For further country specific information contact Justine James at [JustineJames@talentsmoothie.com](mailto:JustineJames@talentsmoothie.com) or call 020 7127 4741.

*This report contains data from 682 responses in 12 Asian countries. This is compared with 2858 responses from the rest of the world, 75% of which are from the UK.*

52% FEMALE 48% MALE

11% STUDYING FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

25% UNDERGRADUATES

17% POST GRADUATES

42% EMPLOYED

18-20 YEARS OLD 17%

21-24 YEARS OLD 47%

25-28 YEARS OLD 36%

