GLOBAL

Job Confidence Index 2021

SELBY JENNINGS

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About the Index

Selby Jennings engaged with over 1,600 experienced Financial Services sector career professionals around the world, surveying professionals across Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, and Africa as well as North America, from April to May 2021.

Understanding how the talent community feels about their careers and prospects is an essential focus in a post-pandemic workplace. Having unique access to this information is invaluable, especially at a time when financial institutions are defining the modern workplace, coping with varying public health guidelines, leveraging the massive market opportunity, and ensuring they have the right talent in place to facilitate future operational growth.

By offering insights into employee sentiments—what's important to them, and how they view the market and their place in it—our report can assist Financial Services firms to better understand the perceptions, drivers, and pain points for talent in their markets. This knowledge is crucial in helping to hone your strategies to attract, motivate, and retain the best and brightest—the business-critical talent that will see your organization through whatever challenges lie ahead.

Financial Services firms are concurrently facing a candidate driven recruitment market. Businesses recruiting today need to focus on and understand the varied needs of candidates, their work-life preferences, and career motivations, in order to secure the very best talent in one of the most buoyant and competitive job markets of the last decade.

For professionals and potential job seekers, this report provides insights into the minds of Financial Services peers around the world, revealing trends related to market confidence, compensation, and more. Understanding these factors can help position professionals to leverage a booming job market, or simply better understand the opportunities available. ▸

1 Global Overview

Factor	% of respondents			
Seniority	Global	APAC	EMEA	North America
Executive	20%	15%	18%	23%
Director	29%	28%	32%	26%
Mid-Senior	37%	40%	35%	37%
Associate	12%	14%	13%	12%
Entry Level	2%	3%	2%	2%

Sector	Global	APAC	EMEA	North America
Financial Technology	14%	14%	11%	16%
Legal & Compliance	13%	12%	20%	9%
Risk Management	9%	9%	7%	10%
Investment Management	15%	10%	15%	16%
Insurance & Actuarial	13%	4%	3%	21%
Commodities	6%	11%	9%	3%
Corporate & Investment Banking	14%	16%	10%	15%
Quantitative Research & Trading	3%	4%	4%	3%
Sales & Trading	8%	11%	12%	5%
Private Banking & Wealth Management	5%	9%	9%	2%

Demographics

The 1,600 Financial Services professionals engaged in this survey hold positions at all levels of seniority across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Asian Pacific region. 55% of respondents are located in North America with 34% in EMEA and 11% in APAC.

Region or Country of work	% of respondents
Northeast	44%
West Coast	12%
Southeast	12%
The South	10%
Midwest	9%
Mid-Atlantic	4%
Great Lakes	4%
Southwest	1%
Non-U.S.	4%

Country of work	% of respondents
United Kingdom	32%
Germany	21%
Switzerland	12%
Luxembourg	5%
Netherlands	4%
France	4%
Italy	3%
Spain	2%
United Arab Emirates	2%
Other	15%

Country of work	% of respondents
Singapore	40%
Hong Kong	20%
India	14%
China	10%
Australia	4%
Indonesia	3%
Other	9%

Economic Optimism in the Spotlight

In its June 2021 Global Economic Prospects, the World Bank reported that the global economy is expected to meteorically expand by 5.6% in 2021; the quickest post-recession pace in 80 years, on the back of strong rebounds from a few major economies, including the U.S. and China, which are expected to contribute one quarter of global growth in 2021[1]. Despite significant progress, the pandemic-induced collapse continues to leave a long-enduring scar on many developing markets and rapidly evolving economies.

However, optimism is emerging on the horizon; prospects for an uneven recovery is set to impact world trade this year. According to The World Trade Organization (WTO), world merchandise trade is forecasted to accelerate by 8.0% after plunging to 5.3% in 2020[2].

The notable developments, which are dominating economies across the globe, are also resonant in the survey data. Among all global respondents, 54% shared an optimistic caliber regarding the current economic situation, whereas only 17% report that their outlook is clouded by uncertainty. This is a direct and rapid reversal from last year's report, where a minor segment (14%) of respondents were positive about the next 12 months and 62% had a gloomy outlook. This signifies a dynamic recovery in just 12 months, even with some regions still grappling with the pandemic and its economic fallout. Firms therefore need the right talent to capitalize on this market, which is rife with opportunity.

Confidence in Economic Recovery

Q. How do you think the economy will fare in the next 12 months?

The upswing in markets is also reflected in Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) activity, which has always been a good indicator of economic confidence from a Financial Services standpoint. Global activity surged in Q1 of 2021 to a year-to-date record, as companies and investment firms rushed to get ahead of changing patterns of work, shopping, trading, and healthcare as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The total value of pending and completed deals rose 93% to $1.3 trillion, the second-biggest quarter on record, according to data provider Refinitiv. M&A activity in Europe was also up 24.5% year on year at $277.3 billion[3].

1. *The World Bank, Global Economic Prospects, https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects*
2. *World Trade Organization. World trade primed for strong but uneven recovery after COVID-19 pandemic shock. March 31, 2021, https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres21_e/pr876_e.htm*
3. *Reuters. Global M&A sets first-quarter record as dealmakers shape post-COVID world, https://www.reuters.com/article/global-deals-q1-int-idUSKBN2BN3DC*

Read the individual chapters for the full set of survey results and commentary for each region.

Regional Variations in Sentiment

Whilst overall global confidence paints a more optimistic picture than 2020, our survey has also highlighted some important regional differences in Financial Services employee sentiment. These differences may be explained by the multiple ways that individual countries have responded to the global health crisis, the timings of interventions such as the lifting of travel restrictions, and the macro-economic conditions which exist in each country.

Respondents in **APAC** tend to be:

- Least likely to receive a bonus payment (58%)
- Least confident in their own job security (61%)
- Most likely to leave (67%) and most willing to relocate (82%)
- Most motivated by the opportunity to progress their career (62%)
- Most likely to want full time working in office 11%

Respondents in **EMEA** tend to be:

- Most confident in economic recovery (59%)
- Most confident in their own job security (70%)
- Motivated equally by career progression (62%), higher salary (61%) and a new challenge (60%)
- Least enthusiastic about full time remote work 8%

Respondents in North America tend to be:

- Most likely to be pessimistic (17%) about economic recovery
- Most confident that they would find a new role (52%) within 3 months, and more than half (55%) are open to new opportunities in the next 6 months
- Most motivated by higher salary (61%)
- Most enthusiastic about working fully remote 22%

Job Market Confidence - Global

Q. How positive are you about the current job market?

Job Security Confidence - Global

Q. How confident do you feel about your job security in the next 6 months?

Global Job Market and Job Sentiment

The narrative for 2021 is embroidered with positivity. Countries around the world are responding to the 'new normal' triggered by the pandemic, and governments, economies, and financial institutions are recovering from the aftermath, albeit at different rates. Recovery and growth is being piloted by renewed global business optimism and opportunity, which is in turn, spills over into Financial Services activity.

Unsurprisingly, this global picture is a direct turnaround from the hardwired negativity of last year. Overall, the results indicate that confidence in the job market for Financial Services professionals is at an all-time high, with over 58% feeling either positive or very positive, a predominant spike from only 23% in 2020. As the increase in M&A and IPO activity across all regions is filtering through, respondents are seeing this reflected in a burgeoning recruitment market with businesses competing for critical talent and widespread opportunities.

The global sentiment in respondents' own job security remains extremely stable, with over half (67%) feeling confident or very confident about keeping their jobs over the next six months. This might be a reaction to the strategy of many Financial Services firms who chose to reallocate talent resources rather than make them redundant.

Annual Bonus - Global

Q. Have you received a bonus this year? If so, did it:

Global Compensation and Bonuses

Predictably, 2020 bonus payments were impacted negatively, as the annual incentive award cycle simultaneously coincided with the Covid-19 outbreak. Last year was a balancing act for bonus programs, flat predictions for trader bonuses were reported by the Wall Street Journal in August 2020 with senior executives under pressure to maintain the bonus levels of the previous year.[4]

Despite the economic headwinds, 63% of respondents received a bonus, nearly identical to last year. Our data suggests that Financial Services institutions were keen to proactively retain high-performing talent in anticipation of weathering the approaching storm. Bonus amounts have slightly dipped, with 25% seeing an increase (up 3% from last year) but more professionals receiving a reduced bonus (14% vs. 11% in 2020).

Steve Yendell, Chief Operating Officer at **Phaidon Internationa**l, the global parent company of **Selby Jennings**, adds, "the rewards on offer vary significantly between firms and business-critical candidates will naturally align themselves with the right organization in order to maintain their expected income."

4. *Bloomberg, Bank of America Jolts Traders With Flat Bonus Pool in Omen for Wall Street, November 25, 2020 https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-25/bofa-jolts-traders-with-flat-bonus-pool-in-omen-for-wall-street*

Employment confidence - Global

Q. If you become unemployed, how confident would you feel in finding another job in the next 3 months?

Confidence in Future Job Market

Q. Over the next 12 months, how confident are you that the job market will get better?

Global Future Job Market and Employment Confidence

Last year, the pessimistic calibre canvassed by respondents' confidence in the job market was undoubtedly fuelled by the uncertainty of the pandemic. For some, that uncertainty lingers, as the recovery is dependent on constituent countries' own recoveries and the disparate pressures put on their governments and economies.

Selby Jennings addressed this longer-term outlook by asking respondents to rate their expectations of the job market in the next 12 months. Those surveyed in both the North America and APAC have similar long-term expectations, but the real bright spot is EMEA with the highest positive sentiment and lowest neutral and negative sentiment.

However, the gloomy memorandum certainly evolved in 2021. Globally, respondents are much more confident in their ability to find new employment within 3 months with almost half (49%) reporting that they were confident or very confident - an uptick from last year.

Job Satisfaction

Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?

Trade-off between job satisfaction and mobility

Job satisfaction is a key ingredient for business success; a fundamental driver that may yield the perfect storm for employees looking to pursue new endeavours or change positions entirely. Our survey shows, despite 30% of respondents who felt unsatisfied, global job satisfaction remains considerably high at 49%. This optimistic trajectory is consistent across the differing regions, with the exception of APAC, where 36% of respondents felt unsatisfied in their current jobs. While the overall outlook is encouraging, the numbers in APAC point to a downturn trend in employee satisfaction, so managers and team leaders should take note – failure to address this could result in the loss of industry-leading talent.

Intention to Leave

Q. How likely are you to look for a new role in the next 6 months?

Intention to Leave

Financial Services firms are in the parameters of a market that is deeply oriented by candidates. This has inevitably bolstered employee job seeker confidence, which in turn, is further echoed in the numbers; employees reported that they were either likely or highly likely to leave their current employer. According to our survey, 60% of all employees are looking to leave and this is most strongly expressed by respondents in APAC and EMEA. Candidates expressed a willingness to embark on new opportunities in the next 6 months, a chasm which exemplifies the dynamic labor market, where demand and supply are in a continual dissonance.

Enterprise leaders and HR managers should be aware that their current talent may be on the move. Spurred by opportunity, employees may be likely to change jobs as there is no better time to pursue greener pastures than in a candidate driven landscape. In competitive markets, the challenges of recruitment and retention in a highly mobile talent pool is sure to set the cornerstone in 2021.

The data further illuminates that flexible hours and a remote working model is simply not enough of a critical component to retain key talent. This also permeates with the particular thoughts and feelings of candidates regarding their companies' treatment of them throughout the pandemic. Bundle all these factors together, some employers might see themselves faced with a wave of resignations.[5]

Steve Yendell comments, "in the current landscape, we really see high mobility in candidates. It is essential that clients have contingency plans in place for key staff and take advantage of higher candidate appetite."

5. *Forbes, Talent Exodus: A Perfect Storm For Leaders?, May 6, 2021 https://www.forbes.com/sites/benjaminlaker/2021/05/06/talent-exodus-a-perfect-storm-for-leaders/?sh=6ca12b201d4a*

Willingness to Relocate

Our survey highlights an impulse amongst employees to expand both their employment options and physical parameters, with 2 out of 3 specifically reporting that they would consider relocating for the right job opportunity. The results point at a newfound sense of direction in the form of relocation, and against a post-pandemic backdrop, perhaps this enhanced the allure of talent to re-evaluate their options, or even explore new possibilities of where to work and where to live.

Steve Yendell further outlines, "candidates' increasing willingness to relocate elevates the attrition risk for firms as they seek to shift the balance between lifestyle and income. Hiring managers need to have a retention contingency plan and a strategy to identify candidates from outside of a firm's locality if they are to recruit the talent they need".

Willingness to Relocate

Q. For the right job, are you willing to relocate?

Global Career Motivations

A Year of Lost Opportunity

The clearest indicator of motivations from our survey is that whilst 66% of finance professionals are wanting to make up for a year of missed earnings opportunity, this change in sentiment is not universally shared across the regions. With over half (55%) of those surveyed residing in North America, a strong shift in motivation in this region, favouring a higher salary, dominates the global picture. In 2021, 69% of North American respondents shared that this was the most important factor motivating their career. In EMEA the picture is less clear, with respondents almost equally valuing the opportunity to progress (62%) and the desire for higher salary (61%).

When we look across the waters to APAC, where respondents have been surveyed about their motivations for the first time this year, there is a strong desire for career progression, with 78% saying it was an important motivational factor ahead of a higher salary.

While salary is topping the list globally, Financial Services professionals are clearly also motivated by the need to have a new challenge in their careers, a determinant that is firmly taking hold in the top 3, both in the global and regional results.

Motivation Factors - Global

Q. What reason would attract you to seek new employment? (Select all that apply.)

A Flexible Future

It is interesting to note that despite the rising number of employees experiencing new patterns of flexible or remote working during the pandemic, in employee motivations this option increased only slightly.

Research carried out in this year's report examined this sentiment in closer detail. When respondents were asked to evaluate a new job opportunity and consider the importance of flexible working, their response yielded some thought-provoking insights.

Importance of Flexible Working

Q. How important is flexible working when considering a new opportunity?

Importance of Flexible Working by Seniority

According to the latest data, there is a real desire across all seniority levels for a flexible working paradigm. It is most strongly felt at the mid-senior seniority level with 61% of respondents expressing that it was either important or very important, and only 10% of the same cohort reporting that it was either not important or less important.

The fact that flexible modes of working have gained momentum, and are now widely considered important or extremely important by over 50% of entry level and 49% of the most senior respondents, is a repercussion to the changing working patterns and preferences in the talent space. ▸

Home vs. Office

Q. Ideally, how many days per week would you prefer to work from home?

When we analyze the numbers, the desire to work entirely from home is more strongly felt in the North America, in comparison to APAC and EMEA. The pandemic has demonstrated that nimble technologies are readily available, easy to navigate, and more than able to meet the demands of those who want to replace the commute with working from home. The improved work-life balance that this affords is an extremely important factor for some respondents.

A recent survey by PwC[6] highlighted that 69% of Financial Services companies expect 60% of their workforce to be working from home at least 1 day a week, which has magnified up from 40% from before the pandemic.

This is a crucial insight; as understanding employee drivers is the key to creating an attractive package that will bring the top talent to your organization, and motivate them to stay.

In a world where labor markets evolve and morph, coupled with economies that continue to be gripped by the pandemic, having the right people to navigate uncertain waters is crucial. Post-pandemic, Financial Services organizations are in the precipice of a talent war; selecting the right battles can help drive attributable revenue growth, operational efficiencies, and advance human capital functions. To achieve business stability, correctly gauging the idiosyncratic needs of the workforce, their motivators, and satisfaction levels has never been more important. In order to succeed in this new economic landscape, businesses that are looking to retain and secure the top talent will need to move quickly, offering compelling reasons for prospective employees to join, and working hard to understand the unique sentiment in the talent pool, as revealed in our survey.

6. *PwC, Financial Services firms look to a future that balances remote and in-office work, https://www.pwc.com/us/en/industries/financial-services/library/balancing-remote-and-in-office-work.html*

2 APAC

Respondents by country

Q. Which country do you work in?

About the Respondents

During April to May 2021, the Selby Jennings APAC team engaged with over 190 experienced Financial Services sector professionals across the Asia Pacific region.

Factor	% of respondents
Seniority	**APAC**
Executive	15%
Director	28%
Mid-Senior	40%
Associate	14%
Entry Level	3%

Sector	APAC
Corporate & Investment Banking	16%
Financial Technology	14%
Legal & Compliance	12%
Sales & Trading	11%
Commodities	11%
Investment Management	10%
Risk Management	9%
Private Banking & Wealth Management	9%
Insurance & Actuarial	4%
Quantitative Research & Trading	4%

Employee Optimism Correlates Economic Growth

Whilst the pandemic may have been the first to ebb and surge across different regions in Asia Pacific, overall economic activity and recovery has been tentatively progressing.

Fitch Ratings[7] report that intra-regional disparities in the magnitude of the shock and durability of growth outlooks are increasingly evident. The underlying economic outlook for North Asia, Australia, and New Zealand is indicative of a multispeed rebound, which is a more promising projection than most of the South East Asian countries, such as India, partly due to their greater success in containment measures and lowering infection rates. North Asia, in particular, is also benefitting from a new stream of global opportunity, with the demand for electronics and semiconductors[8]; an industry that has already grown exponentially in specialised verticals across Financial Services.

Our survey shows that whilst respondents are not as optimistic in their economic projections (52%) as they were last year, pessimism has reduced to 10% (down from 1%). In contrast, the number of professionals who foresaw a similar economic situation has generally expanded to 38%, an increase by 10%, which clearly shows that respondents are buckling up for a longer recovery. ▸

7. *Fitch Ratings, APAC Growth Outlooks Diverge amid Recovery from Pandemic Shock, https://www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/apac-growth-outlooks-diverge-amid-recovery-from-pandemic-shock-23-04-2021*

8. *Deloitte, Semiconductors – the Next Wave, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/cn/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/deloitte-cn-tmt-semiconductors-the-next-wave-en-190422.pdf*

Speaking to **Abimanu Jeyakumar**, Head of North Asia at **Selby Jennings**, he laments, "the macro-economic view is incredibly positive. Despite China being expected to have a positive economic bounce back, the current outlook is even greater." Where business optimism suffered a hammering in 2020, the shifting sands of this year point to a promising recovery. **Jeyakumar** elucidates, "we are seeing an unbelievable increase in the demand for talent and global fiscal policies have done exactly what was intended - thus, global recovery is very much on its way."

Natasha Madhavan, Head of **Selby Jennings** in South East Asia, shared her view, "Singapore is used to the pandemic and can navigate around and through it. Last year, a considerable amount of headcounts were put on hold, and with the number rolling back into 2021, this has prompted a significant uptick in readily available candidates." The IPO boom has not been reserved for just the West, and the Nikkei[9] reports that new stock listings in Hong Kong have had their best start to a year ever. It is expected that mainland Chinese and Hong Kong firms are rushing to list with $28 billion of anticipated share sales already lined up.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing run high and a number of U.S. listed firms such as Baidu, Tencent Music Entertainment Group, the Twitter-like service Weibo, and short video app Bilibili are hedging their bets that they will be banned from the U.S. Stock Markets and need to sell their shares on the Hong Kong exchange.[10]

The U.S. and China dominate the list of top exchanges with the NYSE coming in first place by value at USD 79 billion followed by NASDAQ, the Hong Kong exchanges (HKEx and HK GEM), the Shanghai Stock Exchange, and Shenzhen Stock Exchange rounding out the top 5.

9,10. Nikkei Asia, Hong Kong IPO pipeline swells as Chinese companies rush to list, https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Markets/Hong-Kong-IPO-pipeline-swells-as-Chinese-companies-rush-to-list

Job Market Confidence - APAC

Q. How positive are you about the current job market?

Job Security Confidence - APAC

Q. How confident do you feel about your job security in the next 6 months?

Current Job Market and Job Sentiment

Last year, the **Selby Jennings** team reported that APAC clearly displayed the highest market confidence, within Financial Services, out of all the regions. The global story of recovery and renewed economic optimism is strongly rippled throughout APAC, with positive sentiment increasing to 47%, which is up from 28%, and negativity descending to 27% from 40.4% last year.

Respondents in APAC feel just as optimistic about their own job security as they did 12 months ago, with 61% disclosing that they are confident in keeping their jobs. However, it's important to take note that individuals who implied that they were unconfident last year, climbed from 18% to 22%.

Natasha Madhavan further reports, "regardless of whether it's a big bank or small firm, most businesses in 2020 made great headways to cut their excess and increase operational strategies. However, when we speak to mid-to-senior level Financial Services professionals this year, a lot have expressed significant worries about being made redundant." ▸

From a talent perspective, **Abimanu Jeyakumar** predicts, "job security confidence to uptick throughout the year, on the back of most financial services organizations having thrived throughout superior trading volumes from clients." **Jeyakumar** goes on, "as economies open up, investment banking revenues will also be on the upward trajectory, which will naturally translate to increased confidence in job security."

The Financial Services sector in APAC has traditionally relied on a strong pool of expatriate candidates. The international travel restrictions, imposed over the last year, have led to a reduced pool that has not been refreshed with inbound new talent. In 2021, almost all countries have been able to flatten their curves and reopen borders, but managers and talent acquisition professionals will be acutely aware of the many hiring challenges which may be exacerbated to pre-pandemic levels. The result has acted as a catalyst, creating an abundance of opportunities for candidates who remain, whilst simultaneously sparking greater competition for that specialist talent.

Compensation Increase - APAC

Q. How likely is it that your compensation will increase in the next 12 months?

Annual Bonus - APAC

Q. Have you received a bonus this year? If so, did it:

Compensation and Bonuses*

This snapshot of APAC is fundamentally different when put in stark contrast to other regions. During 2020, over half of respondents (58%) were awarded bonus payments, perhaps a reflection of the many Financial Services organizations who were primed for growth and robust recovery. When examining the numerical findings this year, the figure reins in at 45%, which points to a lingering hesitation amongst firms, with many potentially putting the breaks on bonus incentives.

Despite less respondents having received a bonus payments compared to their counterparts in other regions - 45% compared to 52% in North America, and 50% in Europe - they remain optimistic the next bonus round. According to the latest data, 34% of employees delineated that they are likely to receive an increase in compensation this year, with 11% of those surveyed saying they are very likely to receive an increase - this is up from 7% in 2020.

Year-end incentive payments across the Financial Services sector are therefore expected to be lower this year with "most bonuses paid out on the back of 2020," reports **Natasha Madhavan**. "Firms were more frugal in 2020, a person could have been the best employee and still received a minimal bonus." **Madhavan** continues, "from PE to Credit companies, we have witnessed many Financial Services institutions who prospered during the world health crisis."

Casting a glance overseas to North Asia, **Abimanu Jeyakumar** also shares his viewpoint, "companies are issuing better bonuses in Hong Kong this year than during the political unrest. Financial Services corporations have made advances despite the global pandemic, and given the uptick in economic activities, I would forecast the bonus pool in 2022 to reach a record-high level."

HSBC signalled to its Hong Kong and Singapore bankers that their bonus pool would be reduced as the firm restructured its operations worldwide[11]. Many have indicated that this is common practice for the particular bank and APAC bonuses tend to suffer when other regions are underperforming. There is no evidence to suggest that this is widespread among APAC Financial Services companies.

** Please note, in the APAC chapter, bonus figures do not include decreased bonuses.*

11. Efinancialcareers, The mood is "bad" but we're not leaving: HSBC Singapore bankers discuss bonus cuts, https://www.efinancialcareers.com/news/2021/03/hsbc-singapore-bonuses

Future Job Market and Employment Confidence

Long-term confidence in the APAC Job Market has dramatically improved since last year, with 52% saying that they are confident or highly confident compared to only 28% last year. Pessimism unfortunately continues to saturate employee sentiment, with 24% of respondents feeling unconfident or very unconfident, a decline of 22% from 46% in 2020.

Of those surveyed, 40% are confident in their ability to find new employment in the event of redundancy, which is a marked rise from last year. However, respondents outline that they are also the least confident in their capabilities to find new employment.

These results are a strong indication that, whilst the economic recovery is happening at a blistering pace, the APAC workforce is generally optimistic about the future. ▸

Confidence in Future Job Market - APAC

Q. Over the next 12 months, how confident are you that the job market will get better?

Employment Confidence - APAC

Q. If you become unemployed, how confident would you feel in finding another job in the next 3 months?

According to IHS Markit[12], the recession of 2020 was worse than the Global Financial Crisis or the East Asian Financial Crisis, as measured by GDP growth in the APAC region on the whole. China's economy suffered a severe negative shock in the first quarter of 2020, which was largely due to the protracted shutdown of industrial production and severe restrictions on consumer expenditure due to lockdowns.

Whilst the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)[13] is optimistic about the recovery in 2021, it indicates that this will be felt unevenly due to differing macro-economic conditions in the varying countries and the extent of government support to vulnerable workers and businesses. Other factors include regional dependency on sectors such as tourism, trade, public health, and vaccination policies.

Since the pandemic, consumer activity has been noticeably more predominant in goods rather than expenditure in services. The pick-up in merchandise trade has benefitted countries heavily involved in supply chains, particularly pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, and IT material.

“Finding new employment means having to prove yourself all over again, some individuals may worry that the last in might be the first out. It can therefore be more beneficial to stay put in an organization where you have previously built credibility,” reports **Natasha Madhavan**. "This creates a perfect dynamic for specialist recruiters, if there is a peak in the job market and people are unable to identify roles - we are the bridge," comments **Abimanu Jeyakumar**.

12. IHS Markit, APAC Economic Outlook for 2021: a year of uncertainty, https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/apac-economic-outlook-for-2021-a-year-of-uncertainty-Jan21.html

13. Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, No ordinary recovery Navigating the transition, https://www.oecd.org/economic-outlook/

Job Satisfaction - APAC

Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction remains largely unchanged since last year, with 48% of those surveyed saying that they are satisfied or highly satisfied with their current job, a 2% fall since last year. Those unsatisfied or highly unsatisfied increased markedly from 23% to 36%.

HR managers and hiring personnel are reminded that failure to address employee satisfaction could result in loss of valuable talent, especially at a time when employees' confidence in their employers may be shaken.

This is all the more important for Asian Pacific employers in the Financial Services sector, who previously relied on a strong, purpose-built pool of expatriate candidates, which have now returned to their domestic regions and failed to be replaced by new talent. In a limited candidate pool, although opportunities are ripe, this has inextricably turned the tide for employers who are currently faced with managing the here and now; namely facing a greater competition for business-nuanced talent.

Gauging employee satisfaction in this highly competitive market is more important now than ever before, businesses rely on having the right people to pivot future growth strategies and remain ahead of industry challenges.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)[14] reports, on average it costs a company 6 to 9 months of an employee's salary to replace key individuals. For an employee earning $200,000 per year, that equates to $100,000 - $150,000 in recruiting and training expenditure.

14. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), No ordinary recovery Navigating the transition, https://www.oecd.org/economic-outlook/

Job Satisfaction Equals Opportunity

Based on our study, the canvassed desires of employees have inevitably changed; with relocation gaining considerable currency in APAC. Survey respondents expressed a strong intention, with 67% elucidating that they were likely or highly likely to leave their current employer, and only 20% commenting they were unlikely or highly unlikely leave. This is a much stronger response than the data presented in North America (55%), although similar sentiments can be found in EMEA (65%).

Key findings in APAC point towards a dissatisfaction within the talent community, which is indicative across a range of factors including career progression, compensation packages, current job prospects, or the slower than expected recovery.

Asian Banking and Finance[15] reported that despite annual pay raises of 25% to 30% since 2019, for Hong Kong-based bankers covering in-demand sectors like technology and health care, in Asia's biggest hubs, young employees are more likely to leave because they think they can earn more—and climb the corporate ladder faster—at one of the many FinTech and investment firms that have sprouted up across the region.

Employee Loyalty

Q. How likely are you to look for a new role in the next 6 months?

15. Asian Banking and Finance, Growing exodus of junior bankers poses talent shortage for banks in Asia: report, https://asianbankingandfinance.net/markets/news/growing-exodus-junior-bankers-poses-talent-shortage-banks-in-asia-report

Willingness to Relocate

APAC respondents show the highest willingness to relocate across the regions surveyed, with 82% commenting yes, in comparison to a small 18% segment who would say no if they were offered the right job. When presented ahead of their counterparts in the U.S. (64%) or EMEA (71%), the APAC data reveals some interesting insights regarding mobility in the Financial Services talent space.

Relocation Destinations

New research by Selby Jennings' APAC team investigated which of the regions many Financial Services e-hubs were most sought after by this highly mobile cohort, showing a clear preference for Singapore.

Singapore provides a wealth of opportunities, not only to expat employees, but for enterprise leaders looking to leverage their exponential growth plans in one of the fastest-evolving epicenters in Asia. The factors driving talent mobility to Singapore include:

1. Government Initiatives

The Singapore government implemented a variety of measures, from the Stabilization and Support Package, to the Resilience Budget, which cushioned the global pandemic blow on companies and workers.[16]

2. Low Tax Rate

The personal income tax rate in Singapore is one of the lowest in the world. The low taxes and other incentives also qualify Singapore as a tax haven for foreign investors. The Singapore tax policy and its location make it a gateway for companies hoping to expand into the emerging Asian economies, which have made this island city-state, not just a global hub for international investment and commerce, but also beneficial for individual professionals.

3. Corporate Stability

A large portion of Financial Services firms have relocated their office hubs to Singapore because regulatory bodies have made the registration process seamless and easy. This attracted a lot of foreign investments including billionaire Ray Dalio[17], Google co-founder Sergey Brin[18], and billionaire appliance investor James Dyson[19].

16. KPMG, Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19, https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/singapore-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html

17. Bloomberg, Billionaire Ray Dalio set to open family office in Singapore, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-26/billionaire-ray-dalio-set-to-open-family-office-in-singapore

18. BBC, Sergey Brin: Google co-founder sets up family firm in Singapore https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55914177

19. Finews Asia, U.K.'s Second Richest Hiring for Family Office in Singapore https://www.finews.asia/high-end/29743-u-k-s-second-richest-hiring-family-office-professionals-in-singapore

Career Motivations

Particularly for APAC respondents, career progression is the prime motivating factor (78%), closely followed by the desire for a higher salary (72%), and the need to find a new challenge (66%). Their motivations are much more closely aligned with that of the EMEA cohort than informants from North America.

The importance of flexible or remote working was with 35% on the lower end of the spectrum of importance. The pandemic forced many corporate ecosystems to follow mission-critical initiatives and adopt flexible working patterns, which thereby supported continued business activity - a trajectory that is not so similar in APAC.

Motivation Factors - Global

Q. What reason would attract you to seek new employment? (Select all that apply.)

Importance of Flexible Working

Q. How important is flexible working when considering a new opportunity?

Home vs. Office Balance

Q. Ideally, how many days per week would you prefer to work from home?

Flexible Working

When asked directly about their desires for flexible working options with regard to considering a new role, APAC employees responded quite differently to the other regions, with only 38% indicating that this was an important factor, compared to 60% in EMEA and 61% in the U.S. Similarly, a disparate response was given with only 18% indicating that it was either less important or not important compared to 14% in EMEA and 12% in North America.

When asked about their preference for offsite or in-office working patterns, APAC respondents also had a distinct perspective with 9% preferring to solely work from home and 11% not wanting to work from home at all.

As we progress into the future and beyond, it's interesting to note that flexible working dwindles in the career preferences for APAC employees. Financial Services firms should therefore take stock and align their service offerings to the unique sentiments of the talent community.

"The corporate culture in Asia is embroiled by a work hard framework, with many individuals preferring a separation between work and home", reports **Natasha Madhavan**. "Asian cities such as Hong Kong and Singapore are comparatively smaller in geography, so it's easier to shuttle between work and home, thus flexible work is not a determining factor for employees."

APAC Findings

Across Asia Pacific, the mandate is clear: rather than offering a working model that is tethered to a remote setting, Financial Services firms need to move quickly, lining up their ducks to outmanoeuvre the competition. To avoid the pitfalls and lackluster offers, organizations should work hard to address the particular motivators, bright spots, and provide compelling reasons for the APAC talent network to join them, or risk being snatched up by competitors. To achieve financial stability and succeed in a candidate driven market, Financial Services institutions will need to tighten their talent acquisition processes and carve out a dynamic operational structure to secure the right visionaries. With international mobility returning to pre-pandemic levels, employers and hiring managers will need to work fast to navigate through a highly competitive talent pool.

3 EMEA

About the Respondents

During April and May 2021, 480 experienced Financial Services professionals across the Europe, Middle East and Africa region took part in our survey.

Factor	% of respondents
Seniority	**EMEA**
Executive	18%
Director	32%
Mid-Senior	35%
Associate	13%
Entry Level	2%

Sector	EMEA
Legal & Compliance	20%
Investment Management	15%
Sales & Trading	12%
Financial Technology	11%
Corporate & Investment Banking	10%
Commodities	9%
Private Banking & Wealth Management	9%
Risk Management	7%
Quantitative Research & Trading	4%
Insurance & Actuarial	3%

From Gloom to Brightness

When asked about their economic outlook for the next 12 months, EMEA respondents were the most positive (59%) and least negative (16%) of all the regions surveyed. This is the polar opposite of last year's findings where the overwhelming majority of 63% was pessimistic and only 13% were optimistic about future economic conditions.

Of course, with a recovering if not booming market, responses this year would be expected to look a lot brighter. M&A and IPO activity has returned with gusto to the European market. Reuters reports that M&A activity in Europe was up 24.5% year on year at $277.3 billion. Investment Week reports[20] that the first quarter of 2021 saw an IPO boom, with the greatest number of Q1 listings since 2007, almost three times the number of Q1 2020 listings. Technology firms topped the table with 11 companies coming to market over the first half of the year, closely followed by 7 online retailers and 6 healthcare companies.

Insurance Journal further reports[21] that Europe's insurance industry is emerging from the coronavirus crisis with a stronger appetite for M&A. Moody's latest annual survey of chief financial officers (CFOs) from 21 leading European insurers puts that approximately 35% of CFOs foresee double-digit growth in operating profits over the next 12 months, while 20% expect a high single-digit improvement.

For the talent market, such economic upticks lead to increasing fluidity in the market, with more job opportunities available across

all different levels. "The Financial Services field wasn't as affected by furloughs and firing in 2020" says **Matt Nicholson**, Head of **Selby Jennings** Europe. "Instead, hiring was paused. So now, with the economy moving again, many firms are basically catching up with 2 years' worth of hiring. This means while a lot of good candidates are out there and willing to move, they have a lot of opportunities to choose from, as everyone is looking for the same people."

James Warnaby, Head of **Selby Jennings** London, adds, "In good times it's a candidate driven market. With business confidence and activity returning, there are also lots of opportunities out there. Strong candidates tend to receive multiple offers which are heavily counter-offered, as retention is just as important a factor as attraction for clients in this climate."

20.Investment Week, Resurgent UK IPO market outstrips full-year 2020 in first half of 2021 https://www.investmentweek.co.uk/news/4033910/resurgent-uk-ipo-market-outstrips-2020-half-2021

21.Insurance Journal, Europe's Insurers Expect Robust M&A Activity and Strong Earnings in 2021: Moody's, https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2021/06/22/619675.htm

Job Market Confidence - EMEA

Q. How positive are you about the current job market?

Job Security Confidence - EMEA

Q. How confident do you feel about your job security in the next 6 months?

Current Job Market and Job Sentiment

With increased economic activity and plenty of job opportunities available, respondents in EMEA, just as on a global scale, show a high level of confidence in the current job market. Those positive and very positive make up 56%, compared to 23% who are negative or very negative. This is a complete reversal in sentiment compared with 2020 (21.2% positive or very positive and 56.4% negative or very negative).

Those surveyed also feel particularly confident in their own job security with 71% either confident or very confident that they will keep their jobs. This is the highest job security of all the regions, with North America at 66% and APAC the least confident at 61%, and again showing a dramatic improvement compared to last year's confident cohort of 46%. Negative job security sentiment for those that are unconfident or very unconfident has similarly fallen to 17% from its 2020 high of 37%.

This stark turn-around is driven by a complex combination of factors. While the progressing vaccination scheme, post Brexit bounce-backs, and a recovering economy have improved overall confidence, candidates have gotten used to the changes businesses have had to make in response to COVID-19 and the changes they as individuals have had to make to how they live and work.

"People are not worried about last-in-first-out anymore, as the job market has stabilized. Also, those candidates who went through a hiring process last year often had a particularly arduous journey to get in, because of the reduction in the market and high scrutiny over the hiring process. Consequently, they are much more confident that they are not going to be let go that quickly now", says **James Warnaby**.

Compensation and Bonuses

Our survey shows that 63% of those surveyed in EMEA received a bonus, similar to the 62% last year. There are some variances in the bonus amounts however. While some benefited from a higher bonus in 2021 (23%), 15% saw a reduction in bonus payments year of year. Overall, the number of professionals not receiving a bonus fell from 36% in 2021 to 16%.

This redistribution of compensation demonstrates that European employers in the Financial Services sector were conscious of the importance of retaining their talent during the uncertainty caused by the global pandemic.

Firms are now faced with the challenge of recruiting in a buoyant job market with employees and candidates who are increasingly considering multiple offers and job confidence. Looking at the data, nearly half of the respondents (47%) are expecting an increase in compensation, up 10% from last year. This underlines the need to focus on an attractive compensation package which is vital to ensure that employers can secure and retain the best talent now that business confidence and activity are flourishing.

Bonus Payments 2020 vs. 2021

Q. Have you received a bonus this year? If so, did it:

Compensation Increase

Q. How likely is it that your compensation will increase in the next 12 months?

Future Job Market and Employment Confidence

Candidates are thriving, employers struggling

Mirroring the improvements in job security, confidence in the future job market has dramatically improved, with 2020's gloomy figure of 31% having nearly doubled. In 2021, almost 60% of respondents are either confident or very confident that the market will improve in the next 12 months. Negativity about the job market has also eased slightly to 20% down from 21.3% in 2020.

Respondents' confidence in their ability to find new employment has similarly improved in the last 12 months with 48% confident or very confident. General confidence levels have risen in those with a negative outlook, as only 34% report they are either unconfident or very unconfident, compared to 48.9% in 2020. ▸

Confidence in Future Job Market - EMEA

Q. Over the next 12 months, how confident are you that the job market will get better?

Employment Confidence - EMEA

Q. If you become unemployed, how confident would you feel in finding another job in the next 3 months?

Part of this confidence might result from the fact that in the Financial Services sector, many firms did not avail themselves of furlough, preferring to pause recruitment instead. A recent parliamentary briefing research[22] showed that as of 30th November, only 2% of eligible jobs in the Financial Services sector were on furlough, compared to 13% across the whole economy.

James Warnaby comments, "the Financial Services sector primarily elected to furlough or reallocate staff rather than to make them redundant. The banking sector in particular, having learned from their experiences during 2008, wanted to be seen as part of the solution, not the problem. Recruitment plans were largely on hold in 2020, however, as confidence in business activity has returned so has confidence in the job market and recruitment activity has rebounded."

The caveat of this positive development is an increasingly challenging hiring market from the employers' point of view. Hiring in the current market is significantly harder than during pandemic times, where less talent was on the move and not as many jobs available.

Matt Nicholson explains, "the talent shortages of recent years have not gone away. Now, in a booming market, good candidates are available again, but are getting multiple offers and there is an extremely high threat of counter offers."

This creates a complicated dynamic of hiring where it becomes difficult for employers to secure the critical talent they need. "Nowadays, we are generating more and more offers, but face more complications in closing than last year" adds **Nicholson**. He continues, "We're finding that building relationships within the talent market early on is key here, with face-to-face meetings positively influencing the processes. We have started meeting candidates as well as clients again and are seeing promising results."

22. UK Parliament, Financial Services: contribution to the UK economy, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06193/

Job Satisfaction

Stagnant satisfaction should be on employers' watchlist

Our survey showed that, in EMEA, overall job satisfaction remained highly stable with those respondents satisfied or highly satisfied marginally increasing to 46% from 45% in 2020. Those unsatisfied or highly unsatisfied remained equally unchanged at 30%. Compared to the other regions, European respondents are slightly less satisfied than their colleagues in both North America (50%) and APAC 48%.

Whilst these results are stable and have not decreased, it is one to keep an eye out for HR departments and leaders. In a market loaded with opportunities and the power on the talent side, job satisfaction could be an important influencer of willingness to leave. Employers should not underestimate this in times where it's increasingly hard to both retain current staff and secure new talent.

Job Satisfaction

Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?

Intention to Leave

Q. How likely are you to look for a new role in the next 6 months?

Intention to Leave

Talent is waiting in the wings

In 2020 we reported that 35% of European respondents were considering leaving their employer in the next six months. The situation has intensified in 2021, with those reporting that they are either likely or highly likely to consider an exit rising to 65% and the amount of those set on staying cut in half at 20%.

These results echo the sentiment displayed in the previous sections around economic and job market confidence. The bottom line is, talent is on the move and while that is promising for employers looking to hire, it also means they need to have contingency plans in place for their current critical staff.

As mentioned before, many firms in the Financial Services sector did not pursue furlough or redundancy options preferring to redistribute employees and delay recruitment. But generally, it was a less secure job market, reflected in low confidence numbers in last year's survey. So perhaps intention to leave was rather surprisingly high in 2020, with a third considering this option, despite limited confidence in the market.

With much more opportunities emerging in the market now and less insecurities, this significant rise in intention to leave is not unusual and needs to be taken seriously by employers.

Willingness to Relocate

71% of Respondents in EMEA expressed that they would consider relocation if the right job opportunity was offered, with only 29% not open to this option.

When asked to specify where they would consider relocating to, UK respondents expressed a clear first choice preference with 4 out of 10 welcoming to work outside of Europe and the UK. EMEA-based respondents on the other hand prefer to stay within Europe/UK if they were to relocate, with more than 40% selecting that option on average. Only a low number in all regions would stick to the borders of their current country if presented with the option of relocation.

This high level of mobility offers great opportunities for those firms wishing to attract talent from other countries, especially for overseas companies looking for talent from the UK.

At **Selby Jennings**, we also find that many European candidates currently working in the London market tend to have a greater affinity to leave London and be closer to their families again. Historically, many EU nationals would come to London for better job opportunities, but the desire to return to their roots at times now seems to outweigh the drive for opportunity.

At the same time, since Brexit came into effect, it proves a lot more difficult to arrange visas between the UK and the EU. This added a complication to many relocation processes, since there are also extensive backlogs caused by the pandemic to be factored in.

Most Desired Relocation Destinations - EMEA

Q. If you are willing to relocate, where would you consider relocating to?

Matt Nicholson elaborates, "the ease of access to the candidate market in this respect has actually decreased. Since Brexit, we see more activity across Financial Services in Amsterdam, actually more so than in Paris and Frankfurt, which is taking market share from the UK. Particularly in trading, there is an explosion of trading houses and pro trading shops in the Dutch market, but all currently struggle to secure UK-based talent because of relocation issues."

Career Motivations

The top three factors which motivate EMEA careers remain the same for 2021. However, our survey data shows that their relative importance has changed significantly since 2020. The importance of having the opportunity for career progression still tops the list, though has reduced to 62%, slightly down from 65%. A higher salary and the need for a new challenge have switched places, with monetary incentives now the second most important factor at 61%, previously in third place. The need for respondents to have a new career challenge has fallen to third place on 60%.

Generally, all three top motivators have achieved a similar amount of votes, so the combination of the three would be expected to be a winning package for employers to offer.

Warnaby agrees, "opportunity to progress is still the biggest driver for our candidates in processes. Both learning opportunities in individual skills as well as moving up through the firm via promotions are the leading motivators. However, with everyone having received a taste of flexible work last year, it is not as frowned upon as much anymore as it used to be in the Financial sector. So not offering it will rule the employer out for some candidates. And while salary is not the number one driver, bonuses and salary increases might have been smaller than usual last year, so professionals are definitely looking to make up for this setback when considering new roles."

Motivation Factors - Yearly Change

Q. What reason would attract you to seek new employment? (Select all that apply.)

Home vs. Office Balance

Q. Ideally, how many days per week would you prefer to work from home?

Importance of Flexible Working

Q. How important is flexible working when considering a new opportunity?

The Rise of Flexibility

With many having been exposed to the new normal of flexible working during the pandemic, its importance as a motivational factor has risen in EMEA from 18.6% to 24%. New research conducted in this survey shows that 60% of respondents indicated that they expect to have the option of a more flexible approach to working when considering a new role.

Our results also show that 64% of respondents want to spend either 2 or 3 days working from home The preference for working fully remote or full-time in the office is not expressed often, with 8% and 6% respectively.

In the end this much is clear and has been often discussed in the media by now – just like in most office-based professions, the majority of Financial Services professionals prefer a hybrid working pattern. The data shows that in EMEA, the top choice is actually 2 days working from home, indicating a preference for more time in the office than remote. This is also seen in other markets, as even Big Tech, who were some of the first to announce long-term remote working regulations, are increasingly backtracking on this stance[23].

"What we are seeing is that the novelty of working from home has worn off a little bit," comments **Nicholson**. "The need for human interaction is gaining in importance, especially for juniors and the younger population. They benefit a lot from being around peers as well as more experienced seniors. At the same time, offers actually don't get accepted anymore if some level of remote or flexible working is not offered and we saw a significant pushback when clients reverted to full-time in the office too quickly. So generally, the expectation is to have the option, which has to be considered by clients in this extremely competitive market."

23. BBC, Remote working: Is Big Tech going off work from home?, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-56614285

4 North America

Respondents by US region

Q. Which US state do you work in?

Factor	% of respondents
Seniority	**North America**
Executive	23%
Director	26%
Mid-Senior	37%
Associate	12%
Entry Level	2%

Sector	North America
Insurance & Actuarial	21%
Financial Technology	16%
Investment Management	15%
Corporate & Investment Banking	15%
Risk Management	10%
Legal & Compliance	9%
Sales & Trading	5%
Commodities	3%
Quantitative Research & Trading	3%
Private Banking & Wealth Management	2%

About the Respondents

During April and May 2021, the Selby Jennings U.S. team engaged with over 780 experienced Financial Services sector career professionals across the USA. Nearly 44% of these respondents were based in the North East region of the U.S., with 52% representing a mix of other U.S. regions and a small percentage (4.6%) based outside the U.S. in Canada or South America.

Economic Outlook - North America

Q. How do you think the economy will fare in the next 12 months?

- I foresee a better economic situation
- I foresee a similar economic situation
- I foresee a worse economic situation

Economic Outlook

More than half of survey respondents across North America displayed confidence in economic outlook with 52% expecting a better economic situation in the coming 12 months. This response is reflected in current market trends and headline news such as the number of IPOs already on the books in the United States. In fact, according to Business Insider[24], 2021 has already seen $171 Bn dollars and by year end predict that US IPOs could potentially raise a staggering $250 billion-$300 billion. A high valuation of the stock market due in large part to the raft of stimulus packages passed during the pandemic and the low interest rate policies currently being pursued by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

According to The New York Times[25], the U.S. economy is also seeing growth with retail sales up 10% in March and strong April jobs numbers leading the way.

24. Business Insider, The $171 billion of US IPOs in 2021 is already a full-year record, https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/ipo-volume-2021-spac-171-billion-us-capital-markets-boom-public-6-1030528116

25. New York Times, Economy retail sales unemployment pandemic, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/15/business/economy/economy-retail-sales-unemployment-pandemic.html

Current Job Market and Job Security

In North America, the current job market is seen by many candidates as a "once in a decade" job market with candidates looking to explore opportunities which they otherwise would not entertain. Candidates who may have been content and comfortable in their jobs are now considering what opportunities are available in a candidate led market, exploring opportunities to take advantage of the current conditions. This is reflected in the survey results with 62% of respondents expressing a positive or very positive outlook on the current Financial Services job market.

Selby Jennings Managing Director, **Kareem Bakr**, comments, "passive candidates are much more willing to take recruiter calls just to see what is on offer. Candidates are holding all the cards as they know that companies are in need of talent as businesses recover from 2020." ▸

Job Market Confidence - North America

Q. How positive are you about the current job market?

#TheGreatResignation

Forbes[26] are just one of many who have commented about the trend known as the "great resignation" which was coined by university professor Anthony Klotz after he studied the exits of hundreds of workers. **Klotz** predicts that many more people who had clung to their jobs during the uncertainty of pandemic are now preparing to quit. After a year of remote work and loving the "freelancer" lifestyle that came with it, they are now facing with a return to "office hours" and are looking to use the opportunity to work for themselves as freelancers. Freelancers are projected to make up more than 50% of workers by 2027 says Forbes[27].

Despite this potential exodus for greener pastures, job security is felt most strongly in the U.S. with 66% of respondents either confident or very confident in keeping their jobs this year compared to 55% in 2020. This reflects the nature of the candidate driven market, with candidates feeling secure in their current positions, and but also open to new opportunities given the high demand for their skills.

Job Security Confidence - North America

Q. How confident do you feel about your job security in the next 6 months?

26. Forbes, How Professionals And Organizations Need To Prepare For The 'Great Resignation', https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2021/07/06/how-professionals-and-organizations-need-to-prepare-for-the-great-resignation/?sh=3428cb9c1123

27. Forbes, Are We Ready For A Workforce That is 50% Freelance?, https://www.forbes.com/sites/elainepofeldt/2017/10/17/are-we-ready-for-a-workforce-that-is-50-freelance/?sh=41ebdefa3f82

Compensation Increase - North America

Q. How likely is it that your compensation will increase in the next 12 months?

Compensation and Bonuses

Of those North America respondents surveyed in 2021, 51% received a bonus this year marginally up on last year's 50.6%. The picture at the other end of the bonus scale improved with just 33% getting either a reduced bonus or none at all compared with 46.9% of respondents in 2020.

Bonus confidence is running high in North America with 57% of respondents expecting either the same or an increased bonus this year, up from 41.5% last year. This confidence is felt in terms of compensation as well, with 57% expecting to receive a compensation increase in the next 12 months. ▸

Annual Bonus - North America

Q. Have you received a bonus this year? If so, did it:

The pressure of a highly competitive jobs market has seen Financial Services firms review their compensation structures. RBC Capital Markets and Guggenheim Securities have been the latest banks to announce raises in order to attract and retain analysts. RBC Capital Markets raised their analyst pay by $10,000 and associate pay by $20,000. Guggenheim Securities first-year analysts will see their salaries increase by $15,000 per year whilst second and third-year analysts will see their salaries go up by $20,000 and $30,000 respectively. Forward thinking firms are also turning to innovative perks and "unique" cash incentives to help retain their staff. These new perk plans include such novel approaches as "Zoom Free Fridays", home exercise equipment and a suite of apple gadgets from iPads to air pods. These firms are clearly seeing value in enhancing compensation packages with incentives that appeal to the younger generation, who focus more on value-additive capabilities that enhance their development and lifestyle.[28]

Compensation and bonus structures are a key driver for candidates in North America. **Jack Trudeau**, Managing Director and Head of Global Partnerships at **Phaidon International** (parent company of **Selby Jennings**), comments that, "with 48% of respondents either receiving less than they were expecting or nothing at all last year they are much more motivated to seek new opportunities with better compensation packages to make up some of their lost earnings during the pandemic."

According to Willis Towers Watson[29] uncertain environment imposed by the pandemic has forced the Financial Services industry to reflect on rewards priorities and their market positioning to make better more informed decisions in an agile candidate driven market.

28. Business Insider, Wall Street's pay-hike frenzy for junior bankers is going into overdrive, https://www.businessinsider.com/wall-street-responds-with-cash-bonuses-as-banker-burnout-mounts-2021-3?r=US&IR=T

29. Willis Towers Watson, Compensation trends spotlight: Financial Services, https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-GB/Insights/2020/12/compensation-trends-spotlight-financial-services

Confidence in Future Job Market

Q. Over the next 12 months, how confident are you that the job market will get better?

Employment Confidence - North America

Q. If you become unemployed, how confident would you feel in finding another job in the next 3 months?

Future Job Market and Employment Confidence

Our survey demonstrates that respondents are very optimistic about the Financial Services job market in the U.S. 55% of those surveyed were either confident or very confident compared with 32.5% a year ago, expressing an overall positive outlooks on the future job market. By comparison, the confidence in North America lags behind Europe (60%) but ahead of Asia Pacific (52%).

A strong recruitment market across the U.S. in the early part of the year has left those surveyed confident in both their current job security and their chances of finding new employment should they seek new opportunities. 51% of respondents expressed that they were either confident or very confident of finding new employment within 3 months. Only 35% were pessimistic about finding new work compared to 43.3% last year. ▸

Forbes[30] reported that leading investment bank Goldman Sachs predicts a convergence of positive events which will lead to a jobs boom. The rollout of vaccines, the impact of massive financial stimulus being injected into the economy and the accumulated savings of those people who've been staying at home for the last year are all factors which are combining to generate a huge pent-up demand for Financial Services jobs.

In this candidate driven market, **Selby Jennings** Executive Director, **Ben Hodzic**, stresses the need for organization to have a quick and streamlined interview process. He also touches on the candidate interview experience, emphasizing that, "companies should leave plenty of time for candidates to ask questions in the interview and really learn what it's like to work for the company. Candidates have plenty of options to choose from so really selling your business to them is key to securing them among competing offers."

30. Forbes, Goldman Sachs Predicts An Upcoming 'Jobs Boom', https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2021/03/10/goldman-sachs-predicts-an-upcoming-jobs-boom/?sh=385f247c23ac

Job Satisfaction

Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?

Intention to Leave

Q. How likely are you to look for a new role in the next 6 months?

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction remains higher than dissatisfaction with 50% of respondents saying that they are satisfied or highly satisfied compared to 28% who are unsatisfied or highly unsatisfied. However, with less than half of their employees expressing satisfaction in their current roles, and high confidence in the job market, this result presents a challenge for organizations looking to retain their top talent.

Intention to Leave

When asked directly, over 55% of North America respondents indicated an intention to explore new job opportunities in the next 6 months, up from 52% in 2020, compared with only 28% who indicated that they would stay in their jobs.

The uncertainty and insecurity in the job market of 2020 has been replaced by optimism and opportunity. People are considering this new "once in a decade" job market and looking to recover any losses in earning potential that may have arisen by their decision to wait out the pandemic with their current employer.

Kareem Bakr shared, "80% of the professionals we speak to are open to taking a call about recruitment even if they are not serious about actively looking for a new role. More and more candidates are interested in hearing what opportunities are out there."

This passive interest further demonstrates that in the current climate, Financial Services professionals are highly mobile and highly motivated to seek out new opportunities.

		Desired Location							
		Midwest	Northeast	Outside US	Southeast	Southwest	Great Lakes	West Coast	Not consider relocating
Current Region	Great Lakes	6%	16%	3%	10%	3%	0%	13%	23%
	Mid-Atlantic	3%	14%	0%	6%	0%	0%	25%	17%
	Midwest	3%	15%	8%	13%	4%	0%	11%	14%
	Northeast	4%	13%	5%	17%	6%	1%	9%	15%
	Not US	0%	12%	2%	17%	0%	0%	7%	17%
	Southeast	3%	5%	4%	18%	4%	2%	11%	24%
	Southwest	8%	17%	8%	17%	8%	0%	17%	0%
	The South	1%	7%	4%	15%	5%	0%	12%	25%
	West Coast	3%	8%	6%	20%	5%	0%	9%	16%

Willingness to Relocate

North America respondents highlighted a highly likelihood to want to relocate with 64% indicating a willingness to relocate for a job opportunity. Last years' survey reported that 75% would consider moving to another region whilst only 25% of respondents were unwilling to move. The 2020 results reflected the migration of professionals out of major cities as many embraced fully remote work. This trend seems to continue in the 2021 with more than two thirds of Financial Services professionals still willing to relocate in North America.

Later in the report we will share results regarding workplace flexibility and remote work options, but it's clear from this willingness to relocate that professionals are prioritizing lifestyle choices.

Relocation Destinations

The most popular relocation destination in 2021 was the Southeast, which has overtaken the Northeast as the top choice. The Southeast continues to emerge as a growing tech and finance hub with strong growth in Financial Services in Charlotte, Atlanta, Miami and across the region. One in every $7 earned in the Charlotte Region comes directly from Financial Services and contributes more than $28 billion to the region's economy, more than any other sector.[31] ▸

31. Charlotte Region Business Alliance, Industry Insights: Financial Services in the Charlotte Region, https://charlotteregion.com/blog/2021/02/25/research-data/industry-insights-financial-services-in-the-charlotte-region/

Florida has become a destination of choice with a winning combination of lower taxes no levies on personal-income, estate, or capital-gains taxes and a milder climate with plentiful golf courses and pristine beaches. For example, Goldman Sachs is reportedly planning to place more than 100 sales and trading professionals in their West Palm Beach, Florida, office.[32]

The Southeast region is also becoming a haven for FinTech start-ups. Over the past five years, the region, led by Atlanta, has gone from being "one of the best kept secrets" in tech, to a vibrant ecosystem teeming with billion dollar "Unicorn" tech businesses. According to Valor Ventures in those five years venture capital investments surged to $2.1 billion in the region, with $1 billion invested in the last year alone.

Major tech companies such as Apple are also attracted by Atlanta's start-up scene and most recently committed nearly $100 million to new projects including the Propel Center, a $25 million bid to build a site near Atlanta's Colleges and Universities.[33]

The continued dominance of New York could also be threatened by the influx of new emerging Financial Services hubs. Bloomberg News opined that New York has seen domestic competition gnaw away at its finance supremacy. Securities-industry jobs have fallen about 7% in New York state since 2000, while rising more than 5% in the country as a whole, according to Labor Department data.

The emerging Financial Services hubs in cities such as Chicago, Miami, Dallas, Los Angeles, and more are drawing companies and professionals away from the traditional home of Wall Street.

Jack Trudeau comments, "Financial Services firms are opening office locations all over the country in hubs that were less traditional for the industry. Many firms moving to the southeast like Florida, or Texas, or the west coast and this migration is appealing to many candidates who want to take advantage of the different lifestyle and lower cost of living." He continues, "many professionals got a taste of working from home in the suburbs or from vacation homes and are keen to hold onto their newfound lifestyles".

32. New York Post Goldman Sachs reportedly plans to move more than 100 bankers to Florida, https://nypost.com/2021/06/15/goldman-sachs-reportedly-plans-to-move-more-than-100-bankers-to-florida/

33. TechCrunch How did Atlanta become a top breeding ground for billion-dollar startups in the Southeast?, https://techcrunch.com/2021/05/02/how-did-atlanta-become-a-top-breeding-ground-for-billion-dollar-startups-in-the-southeast/

Career Motivations

Compensation stands out as the top motivational factor for professionals in North America, with 69% of Financial Services selecting this as a key priority. Notably, in the survey last year the opportunity for career progression had been the top factor, but higher salary has now displaced this in 2021. This finding reflects the nature of the current candidate driven market, where professionals are eager to take advantage of the high demand for talent, and booming job market in the U.S..

Kareem Bakr shares that, "firms must offer competitive compensation to secure talent in this current inflated landscape. They can consider creative compensation strategies as well like deferred compensation or cash bonuses, among other approaches to make their offers stand out to prospective candidates." The **Selby Jennings** team had many firms take a look at their overall compensation structures and evaluate any adjustments that need to be made in today's market.

The desire for flexible working options is also most strongly felt in North America with 33% of respondents indicating it is a top motivating factor compared to 26% in Europe and 28% in APAC.

Motivation Factors - Global

Q. What reason would attract you to seek new employment? (Select all that apply.)

Importance of Flexible Working

Q. How important is flexible working when considering a new opportunity?

Home/Office Balance

Q. Ideally, how many days per week would you prefer to work from home?

Flexible Working

The need to adopt more flexible working patterns due to the pandemic led **Selby Jennings** to conduct new research to better understand the impact that these new patterns have had on the workforce.

When asked directly how important flexible working would be when considering new job opportunity, 61% of North American respondents said it was either extremely important or very important. This was the highest positive response in any region. Furthermore, 33% of North American respondents indicated that it was extremely important compared to 22% in EMEA and only 10% in APAC.

Follow up questioning asked respondents to indicate their preferred balance of days working from home or in the office. 26% of respondents chose three days per week working from home as their preference, and another 26% selected two days per week at home. Further, 22% of those surveyed indicated that they strongly desired fully remote roles, compared to just 6% who wanted to be entirely office-based. ▸

Importance of Flexible Working by Sector - North America

Our findings show that this high desire for flexible working patterns is seen throughout the in the North America across all the sectors. This holds true even in roles traditionally seen as "in-person" such as traders. In our survey, 51% of the sales and trading respondents demonstrated work from home options are important to them. Reuters[34] reported that in a recent survey of 260 (FICC) traders 77% of respondents said they worked from home between March and June for an average of four days a week, with 21% reporting a change in their execution style.

Overall, professionals in the insurance and actuarial spaces, and those working in FinTech, expressed the highest desire for remote work with more than 70% indicating it was extremely or very important.

Jack Trudeau echoes this trend, sharing that, "post-pandemic, candidates no longer see flexible working as an additional benefit or perk. Rather they see this as the new normal and expect to see this on offer from current or prospective employers."

34. Reuters, Remote working high on list of traders' challenges, boosts e-trading: JPMorgan, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-markets-trading-idUSKBN2A90G8

5 Key Findings

Key Findings

This year's annual **Selby Jennings** Global Job Confidence Index Report strives to set a benchmark; evaluating whether the usual push and pull factors have changed in the talent community, all within the framework of fluctuating global economies and their continual response to the world around them. The findings from our Financial Services network across the globe points at a regained confidence in the current labor market, perhaps aided by international vaccine programs, significant monetary policies, or the reopening of economies.

Overall, global economic optimism surpasses an uncertain, and at times, gloomy candidate sentiment that categorized 2020, which aligns to what we are seeing in a market that is brimming with opportunity. However, whilst Financial Services firms made headway to mitigate a talent exodus last year, currently we are in a candidate driven market, and the war for business-critical talent has begun. To navigate through this buoyant market and remain ahead of the curve, businesses need strong leadership, effective employee engagement, and to know how to identify Financial Services visionaries before the competition inevitably does. Although the pandemic might continue to plague many countries and impact the path to achieve international financial stability, it is pivotal to keep your institution on a front footing, following these key principles:

- **Positive employee experience linked to retention and strengthening performance metrics –** communicate with your workforce at all levels of the corporate ecosystem to orient with their vision, preferences, and goals, which in turn, may help to prevent attrition problems from incurring.
- **The movement of talent between industries is accelerating -** prioritize specialist business-critical roles that are highly sought after, e.g. business continuity planning, risk management, automotive semiconductor industry, cybersecurity, FinTech, change management, and analytics.
- **Lead from the front –** map out the market and engage with specialist talent before your competition. As Financial Services players reflect on their long-term goals and pursue new opportunities, amidst the post-pandemic backdrop, many will be presented with multiple offers on the table, so now is the time to secure industry-leading talent that can better position your business for measurable growth.
- **Understand employee motivators and push points so you can offer high caliber candidates exactly what they want –** whether that's a flexible working business model, a competitive relocation package, or a generous bonus or compensation scheme.
- **Partner with your HR function to plan ahead and craft an attractive working policy –** that clearly reflects the ever-evolving business landscape and rapidly changing economy; one that ensures consistency, fair practice, and facilitates work output and outcomes. ▸

Strike while the iron is hot

Today, the Financial Services talent market is ripe with possibilities. With every business spearheading in the same talent pool, talented job seekers will have little tolerance for a sluggish, outdated hiring process. For Financial Services organizations looking to differentiate themselves from the pack, it's important to keep things swiftly moving and make savvy decisions over your business-critical hires. Transformative technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (or VR) can streamline digital processes and keep your talent pipeline fluidly flowing, which might be the best chance to snap up essential employees and policymakers.[35]

Nurture employee engagement levels

Our comprehensive findings highlight that global market visionaries within the Financial Services industry are confident in their employability. Is your business doing all that it can to proactively engage and retain key employees? As organizations are catapulted into a post-pandemic landscape, retaining professionals with strong business acumen and a specialized skill set has never been more imperative. Employers can work hard to understand talent sentiment; namely their preferences and motivators, maintaining communication, and ensuring that your workforce feels valued and supported.

Establish an attractive employment offering

It may sound counterintuitive, but a complete and competitive employment package gains currency. Dynamic attraction strategies should harness a candidates individualistic growth objective, including long-term career progression, adequate compensation, and unique challenges. By investing in the right talent, businesses can profit from longstanding revenue generation and advance their operational growth strategies.

35.Selby Jennings, The Virtual Recruitment Landscape: Reset and Reboot, https://www.selbyjennings.com/blog/2021/06/the-virtual-recruitment-landscape-reset-and-reboot

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About us

Selby Jennings is a leading specialist recruitment agency for banking and Financial Services. For more than 15 years, we have given clients and candidates peace of mind that the recruitment process is in expert hands. Our continual investment in best-in-class technologies and consultant training enables us to recruit with speed, precision and accuracy. Today, Selby Jennings provides permanent, contract and multi-hire recruitment from our global hubs all over the world.

We pride ourselves in keeping our professional network up-to-date with any changes that will shape the future of work or affect the hiring process. Visit our website to discover more invaluable insights, including exclusive research, salary guides and market trends.

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