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S I N G A P O R E

SINGAPORE

2022 MANPOWER SURVEY RESULTS

Hybrid Work: Driving Productivity with Flexibility

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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INTRODUCTION

The past few months has seen Singapore emerge along with the rest of the world from the severe disruptions caused by COVID-19. Singapore has successfully ridden these challenging times better than most other countries.

With increasing hiring seen in most sectors, between July and August 2022, the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore (AmCham Singapore) conducted its annual survey of member companies to understand the latest manpower challenges as well as to identify areas where progress has been made. The level of inclusivity in the workforce, the representation of locals and foreigners in the workforce, and the challenges in attracting talent were a few of the key issues explored.

The percentage of women in the workforce has reduced, especially among the SMEs. Employers looking to hire locally for entry-level positions are finding that candidates have unrealistic expectations, in addition to a lack of relevant skills. There also continue to be a limited number of Singaporeans working in Southeast Asia in regional leadership roles.

The AmCham member survey data suggests that reversing a three-year declining trend, companies now express increased optimism about the ability of local universities to prepare graduates for the workforce. Further, companies are prioritizing flexible work arrangements and workplace health to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace. The number of Singaporeans and Permanent Residents (PRs) in the workforce has increased, as companies are more actively hiring and promoting local talent.

Even as companies are still becoming familiar with it, the COMPASS Framework is viewed as a useful tool and an improvement over the existing Employment Pass Framework. The addition of specialized work passes, e.g. Tech Pass and Overseas Networks and Expertise Pass, are viewed a positive step to attracting international top talent and enhancing Singapore's compeitiveness in the region and the world.

INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

Inclusivity involves recognizing the different members of the workforce would need different kinds of support to succeed at their work and providing the form of support that would enable their success. Organizations that have inclusive policies benefit from greater engagement from their talent and lower rates of employee turnover.

| KEY FINDING 1 | Companies report increased awareness of SG Enable. |

In the past year, more respondents report greater awareness of 'SG Enable' as compared to the previous year but report low utilization of government programs to support employment for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Figure 1. Familiarity with SG Enable

Q: Are you familiar with SG Enable? (n=77)

| 27% | 33% | 40% |

■ Familiar   ■ Somewhat familiar   ■ Not familiar
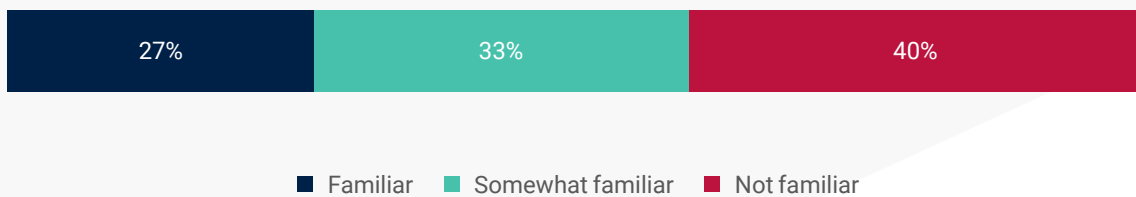
Figure 2. Utilization of any government programs or funding to support employment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Q: Has your company utilized any government programs or funding to support employment of PWDs (e.g. Open Door Programme, Enabling Employment Credit, Inclusive Business Programme)? (n=75)

| 9% | 48% | 43% |

■ Yes – have utilized   ■ No – aware, but have not utilized   ■ No – unaware of such programs
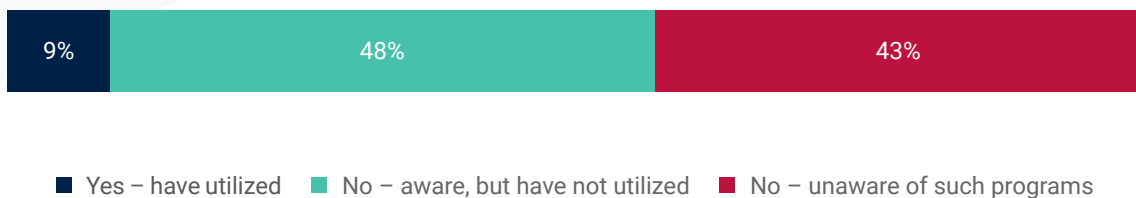
Figure 3. Utilization of any government programs or funding to support employment of older workers

Q: Has your company utilized any government programs to support hiring or retention of older workers? (n=83)

25%	31%	44%

■ Yes ■ Unaware of such programs ■ No
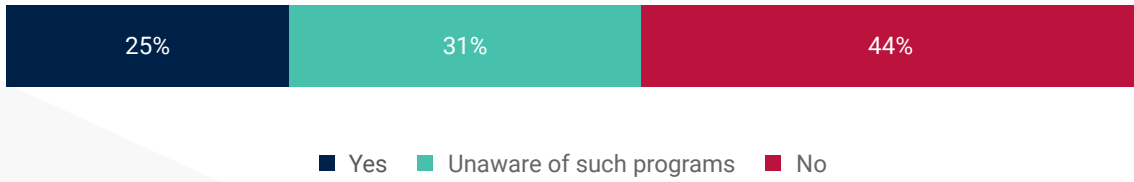
KEY FINDING 2

Most do not report age-related challenges in hiring and retention.

The majority of respondents do not perceive any challenges in hiring and retaining workers in the age group of 55 years and above. Among those facing a challenge in this regard, the lack of suitable jobs presents the biggest concern as compared to last year.

Figure 4. Challenges faced with hiring & retaining Singapore (SG) citizens & Permanent Residents (PRs) aged 55 and above

Q: Which of the following challenges does your company face in hiring & retaining SG citizens & PRs aged 55 and above? (Select all that apply or none). (n=75)

None - we do not face any challenges in this respect	65%
Lack of suitable jobs	21%
Unwilling or unable to reskill	12%
Unable to offer options to work at reduced intensity	11%
Concerns over safety, health & fitness for work	9%
Costs of employer-provided medical benefits	4%
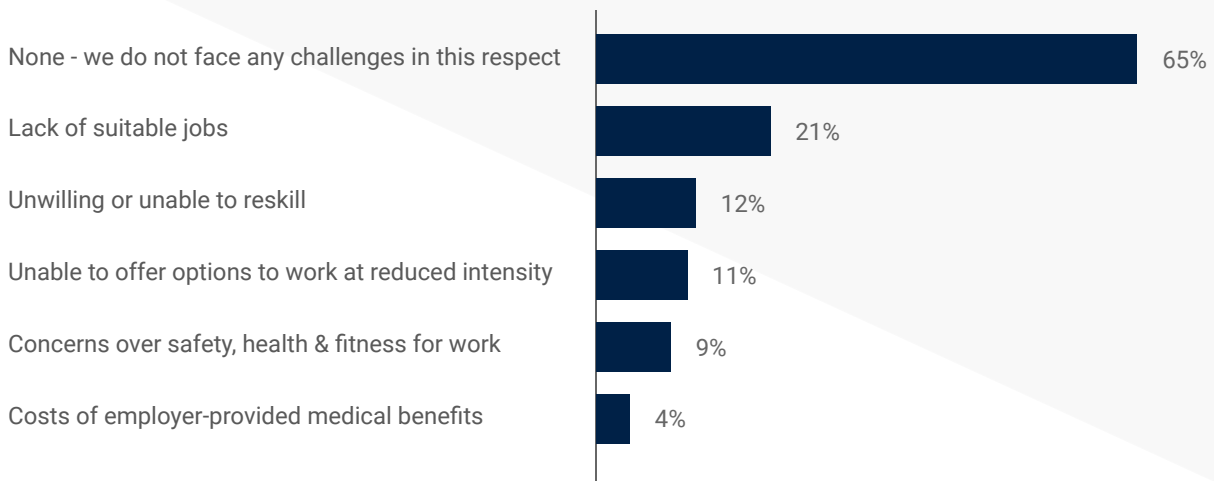
Companies are providing flexible work arrangement, prioritizing workplace health and providing more benefits in order to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace.

Over 80% of respondents report that their companies have official measures in place to foster an inclusive and progressive workplace. Measures commonly used by organizations include flexible work arrangements, health programs, parental leave, worker fitness assessment initiatives, and offering flexible benefits. More respondents reported implementation of workplace health programs as compared to the previous year.

Figure 5. Measures taken by company to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace

Q: Which, if any, of the following measures does your company currently have in place to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace? (Select all that apply or none). (n=77)

Measure	%
Providing flexible work arrangements	84%
Implementing workplace health programs	65%
Parental leave and support for fathers and mothers	56%
Determining worker's fitness for work based on the objective assessment of job requirements and relevant health or physical conditions, instead of solely basing it on age	53%
Providing flexible benefits	53%
Nursing rooms	40%
Restructuring employer-provided medical benefits to additional MediSave contributions or other flexible benefits	34%
Providing part-time re-employment opportunities	30%
Elder care support/leave	30%
More childcare leave than statutory requirement	29%
Engaging mature and other workers in structured career planning sessions	25%
Workplace accessibility audit	18%
Redesigning job organization-wide to be age-friendly	17%
Raising internal retirement and re-employment ages above the statutory minimum	14%
None of the above	10%
Others	4%

Company policies around remote working and health support for employees have changed permanently due to COVID.

Figure 6. How HR practices have permanently changed as a result of COVID-19

Q: How has your company's HR practices permanently changed as a result of COVID-19? (Select all that apply). (n=76)

Category	Percentage
Protocols & tech to support working remotely	86%
Mental health and/or wellness support for employees	79%
Succession planning for critical roles & leadership positions	32%
Expanded benefits and/or leave for employees who are caregivers or parents	25%
Extended paid sick leave for employees	25%
Other	9%
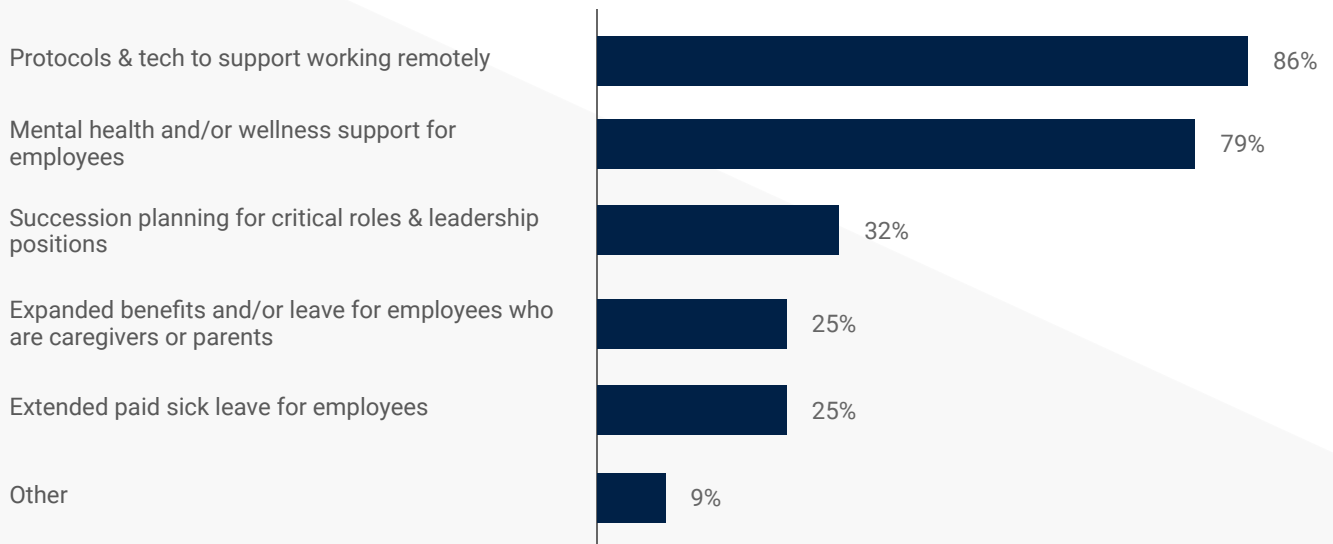
SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE
Reimagining Leadership in the Hybrid World – Survive and Thrive

Contributed by Sunil Puri (Asia Head of Research) and Elisa Mallis (Asia MD) at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

We can all remember the days prior to the global pandemic when remote workers expressed frustration during conference calls where the majority of attendees were in one room, while they made up the minority calling in from other locations. They felt and often were treated like outliers. For many of these already-remote employees, the global COVID pandemic was an equalizer making meetings more inclusive with everybody dialling in. With unprecedented levels of virtual team collaboration, more flexible work hours, and less time spent commuting; it's no surprise that global productivity increased during the pandemic.

Now, in the post pandemic world, as some organizations are eager to get their talent back into the office, the majority continue to lean toward flexible work culture. The hybrid work model is rapidly being seen as the most-accepted workplace construct. Yet most are still just getting a handle on what the hybrid work model really is, the mixed impact it's having, and how it can be leveraged in the best way. Our upcoming Center for Creative Leadership's (CCL) *Reimagining Leadership in a Hybrid World* research, based on 2000+ survey responses and 25+ interviews across 13 countries in Asia and Pacific, provides new insights on how leaders must reorient their approach to leading teams in the new world of hybrid workplaces. The research shares the latest realities leaders must know, actions they must take to drive productivity and efficiency, and skills and mindsets they must sharpen to excel in the hybrid world. Here is a preview.

What leaders must 'know.'
The hybrid work model is no longer a choice. Employees across the world do not want to come back to the office full time. In fact, in a recent survey of 3,000 workers, 64% said they would choose a permanent work-from-home option over a $30,000 pay raise.[1] Our data across Asia Pacific suggests that not only employees, but also their leaders prefer a hybrid model, and one in two respondents feel they are 'thriving' in the hybrid work environment.

The hybrid work model provides much-aspired flexibility. While three in four leaders spent three-quarters or more of their time in the office pre-Covid, only about one-third continue to do so now post-Covid. As most organizations toggle between remote and hybrid models, the preferred future option emerging is the 'office-first' hybrid model, where most employees work onsite at least 50% of the time and 'some' may work remotely. Two in five survey respondents endorse this model. Only about one in five leaders indicate that 'complete flexibility' will be a preferred model in the future.

Direction-alignment-commitment (DAC), which is a necessary condition for leadership to happen in organizations, takes a beating during any kind of disruption. The pandemic years, a mega disruption, have shaken up the DAC balance for most organizations, alignment taking the greatest hit. Over four out of ten survey respondents note that alignment is now harder to accomplish in the hybrid world. With

people working from different locations, and less frequently meeting their peers and teams, coordination among members with different tasks and roles has become harder to accomplish. As we know, an imbalance in DAC often indicates non-optimal shared interactions resulting in multiple leadership challenges.

What leaders must 'do.'
Our early findings indicate that hybrid workplaces result in a number of benefits including improved employee well-being, better talent inflow, and increased productivity. At the same time the model, depending on how it is implemented, may also create barriers such as lack of human connection and decreased collaboration. Leaders must leverage the benefits to curate more compelling workplaces and at the same time navigate the barriers to shape future-ready hybrid work environments. We are finding that most of the benefits and barriers in fact are around human centricity.

Despite many leaders' clear preference for virtual work and its objective advantages related to physical, financial and mental well-being, hybrid work models too often negatively impact the social well-being of employees. Almost one in two survey respondents highlighted a negative impact on social wellness of leaders in a hybrid work environment. Organizations must find new approaches to enable leaders to benefit from the hybrid work environment, while still providing the human connections they crave. Some of these approaches can include better use of cross-functional projects or working groups, getting the right balance of the percentage of time in the office and enabling

tools to help both functional and cross-functional teams coordinate schedules to be in the office at the same time.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is another important aspect that is showing mixed outcomes in a hybrid world. Almost three in four survey respondents indicated a positive impact on organizations' EDI initiatives as they transition to a hybrid work model due to the increased flexibility. At the same time, data shows there is less visibility for under-represented groups who are not physically present as often, compromising their opportunities for career progression.

Who leaders must 'be.'
How can leaders ride the lift that hybrid has to offer when it comes to better work-life balance and more tailored employee experiences? The pandemic has generally made leaders across the globe more empathetic and humane. Harnessing more trust capital, being more learning agile and communicating to drive accountability are a few of the ways of being that are proving successful. Transitioning to hybrid is an opportunity for leaders to reimagine their role in the organization; to think differently and demonstrate different skills, becoming a better version of themselves. More to come on how leaders can go about doing this in November, when we launch the *Reimagining Leadership in a Hybrid World* research study.

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[1] HR Executive: A $30K raise or remote work forever? Employees want remote - HR Executive (https://hrexecutive.com/a-30k-raise-or-remote-work-forever-employees-want-remote/)

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE
Are You Prioritizing Your Employees' Wellbeing?

Mercer

Contributed by Peta Latimer, Chief Executive Officer at Mercer Singapore and Julia Radchenko, Health Consulting Leader at Mercer Singapore

There has never been a more challenging time to be a leader. The pandemic has completely changed the way we live and work: inflation is rising to an all-time high, ongoing geopolitical tensions are dominating the headlines and the employer-employee relationship continues to evolve in aspects like flexible working, pay fairness and purpose-driven value propositions. It's no wonder that people's energy levels and wellbeing are deteriorating at unprecedented levels. According to Mercer's 2022 Global Talent Trends Study, one in five Singaporeans feel de-energized at work, twice as high as the Asia average, and 85% of employees in Singapore are at risk of burnout at work, with one in two employees intending to leave their jobs this year.

The good news is, uncertainty creates room for change. According to our Cigna and Mercer whitepaper, 61% of employees in Singapore are counting on their employers to take care of their wellbeing and 50% want more employer support in improving their wellbeing. As leaders, this growing need for support gives us an opportunity to make changes in our businesses that support the greater good, all whilst working to re-establish a more balanced and trusted employer-employee relationship to build resiliency and help businesses thrive through the projected economic headwinds.

Here are three key ways to prioritize employee wellbeing:

Place wellbeing at the heart of your cultural aspirations. Employee wellbeing needs to be more than a HR conversation. It needs to be a priority with leaders spearheading the discussion and walking the talk. We can no longer ignore the impacts of long term sickness, destructive workplace behaviours and general disengagement. It's more important than ever for employers to create an environment where employees have a sense of agency and empowerment, build a culture that celebrates psychological safety, as well as encourage two-way communication that fosters a sense of purpose and belonging.

Take care of your leaders. Leaders need to be well to lead well. Those in leadership positions face growing pressure with expanded expectations – from being financially and commercially savvy, to having the right access in the market, managing growing regulatory pressure, solving immediate challenges, being viewed as 'experts' in their field, all the while managing the day-to-day operations. It's no wonder leaders are feeling more stressed than ever. According to a survey by Deloitte, nearly 70% of executives globally are thinking of quitting their jobs due to burnout and one in three executives reported feeling exhausted, stressed, overwhelmed, lonely or depressed. As a start, leaders should prioritize their own wellbeing. By role modelling healthy behaviours like taking frequent breaks, making use of vacation time, disconnecting after office hours, leaders have the opportunity to more openly practice vulnerability which ultimately

promotes psychological safety and trust in the workplace.

Don't benchmark wellbeing practices. Companies today tend to look outwards when seeking wellbeing practices, referencing what other companies have done. While it's useful to get ideas, benchmarking ultimately drives a comparison against averages. Each company has their own vision and mission and so it's important to "look from within" and listen to what your employees have to say about their wellbeing. Successful companies continuously engage with stakeholders in thoughtful conversations to understand their needs. In markets where demand outweighs supply, treat your employees as your key stakeholder and focus on what works for them in view of your company's ambition.

We live in extraordinary times with great challenges, but also great opportunities. Despite the headwinds, leaders today have a chance to reset the employer-employee relationship. By leading the conversation from a wellbeing perspective, we will build more trusted relationships with our employees which ultimately fosters a more aligned, energized, and committed workforce.

WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION

A greater number of organizations are turning their attention to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) issues to attract, develop and retain the workforce needed for their growth. In addition to enhancing the skill level of their talent, organizations need to creatively address challenges outside of their direct control like caregiving responsibilities on the talent, and lack of aspiration to make geographical moves.

KEY FINDING 5	**Companies are more actively hiring and promoting local talent. However, there has been a drop in women in the workforce and at senior levels.**

Singapore companies have a good representation of local workers in their workforce. The majority of companies (76%) have predominately Singaporean workforces in Singapore.

However, when compared to last year, there is a significant drop in the number of women in the workforce. This is in line with global trends that indicate more women had to drop out of the workforce during COVID to take on various caregiving needs.

Figure 7. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising Singapore citizens and PRs

Q: Of your total current Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are Singaporeans and PRs? (n=93)

24% — Less than half of total SG-based workforce are Singaporean

76% — More than half of total SG-based workforce are Singaporean
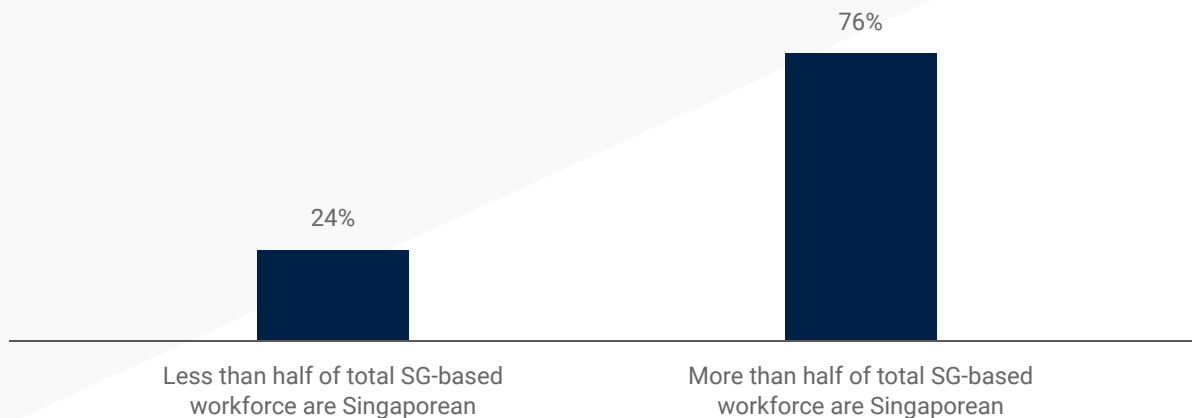
Figure 8. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: Of your total Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are women? (n=93)
Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

| 57% | 41% | 2% |
| Less than half of total SG-based workforce are female | More than half of total SG-based workforce are female | Prefer not to say |
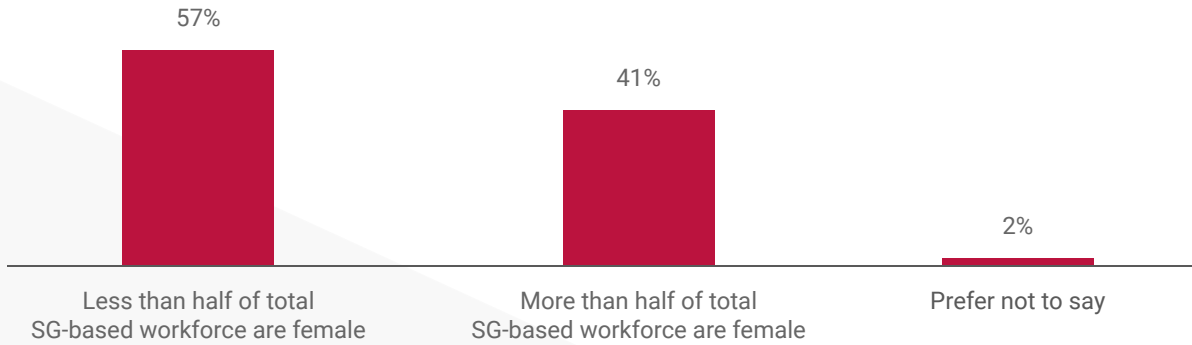
Figure 9. Proportion of total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising Singapore citizens and PRs

Q: Of your total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are Singaporeans or PRs? (n=93)

| 40% | 60% |
| Less than half of senior level SG-based workforce are Singaporeans | More than half of senior level SG-based workforce are Singaporeans |
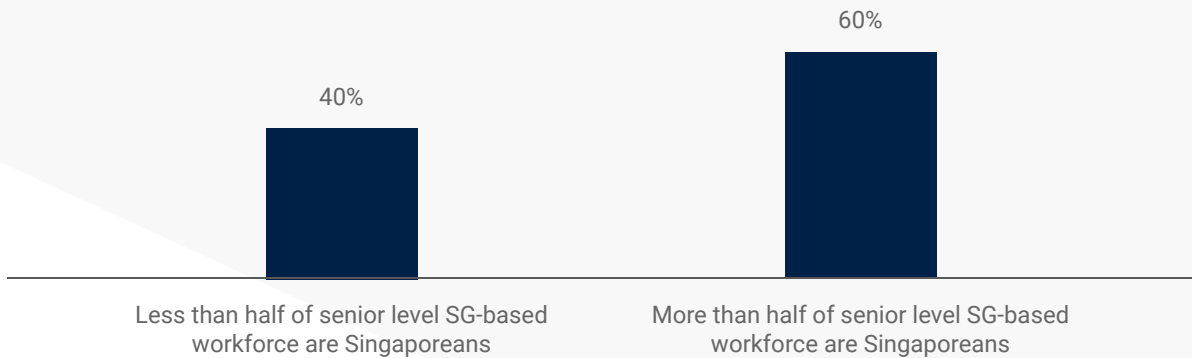
Figure 10. Proportion of total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: Of your total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are women? (n=93)

| 78% | 20% | 2% |
| Less than half of senior level SG-based workforce are female | More than half of senior level SG-based workforce are female | Prefer not to say |
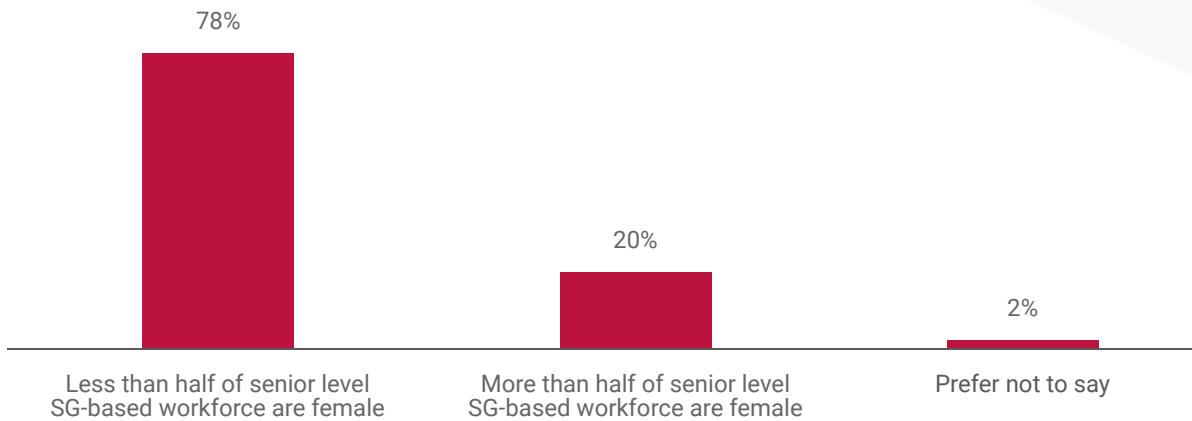
Compared to 2020, both multi-nationals and SMEs see fewer women in the workplace with a bigger drop for the SMEs.

Figure 11. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: What percentage of your total Singapore-based workforce comprises of women? (n=67)
Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

*Companies with predominately <u>foreign</u>
Singapore-based workforces*

61%	37%	2%
Less than half of total SG-based workforce	More than half of total SG-based workforce	Prefer not to say

*Companies with predominately <u>local</u>
Singapore-based workforces*

48%	48%	3%
Less than half of total SG-based workforce	More than half of total SG-based workforce	Prefer not to say
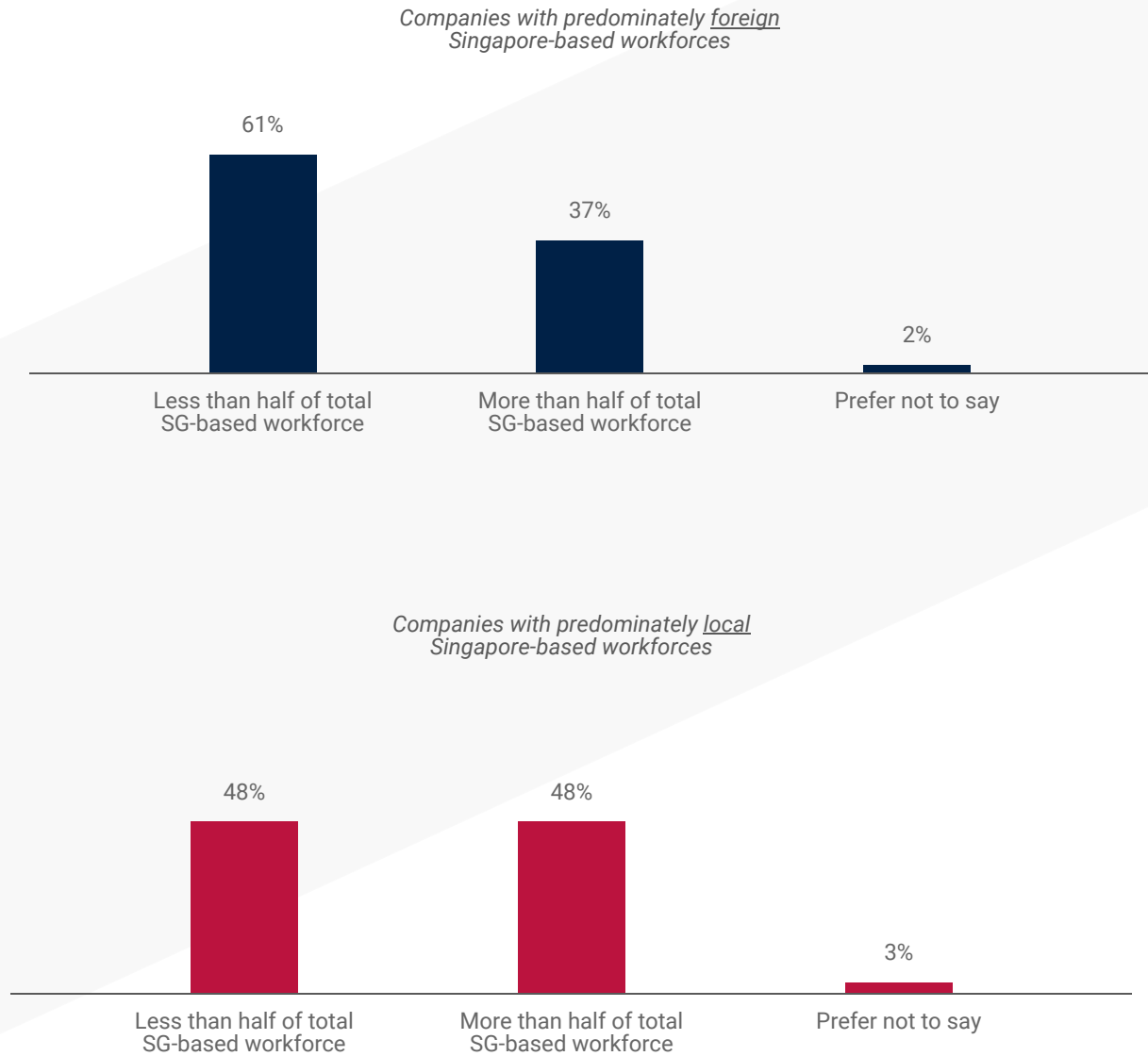
Employers looking to hire entry-level Singaporeans continue to find it challenging to recruit local candidates with relevant skills and realistic salary expectations.

The lack of technical skills has grown significantly over the last year and continues to be the biggest obstacle among Singaporeans for entry-level jobs. This coupled with unrealistic salary expectation results in companies hiring foreigners.

Figure 12. Biggest obstacles to recruiting entry-level Singaporeans and PRs with less than five years professional experience, which result in company hiring foreigners

Q: What are the difficulties in recruiting entry level Singaporeans, incl. PRs, with less than five years of professional experience that result in your company hiring foreigners? (Select all that apply or N/A).

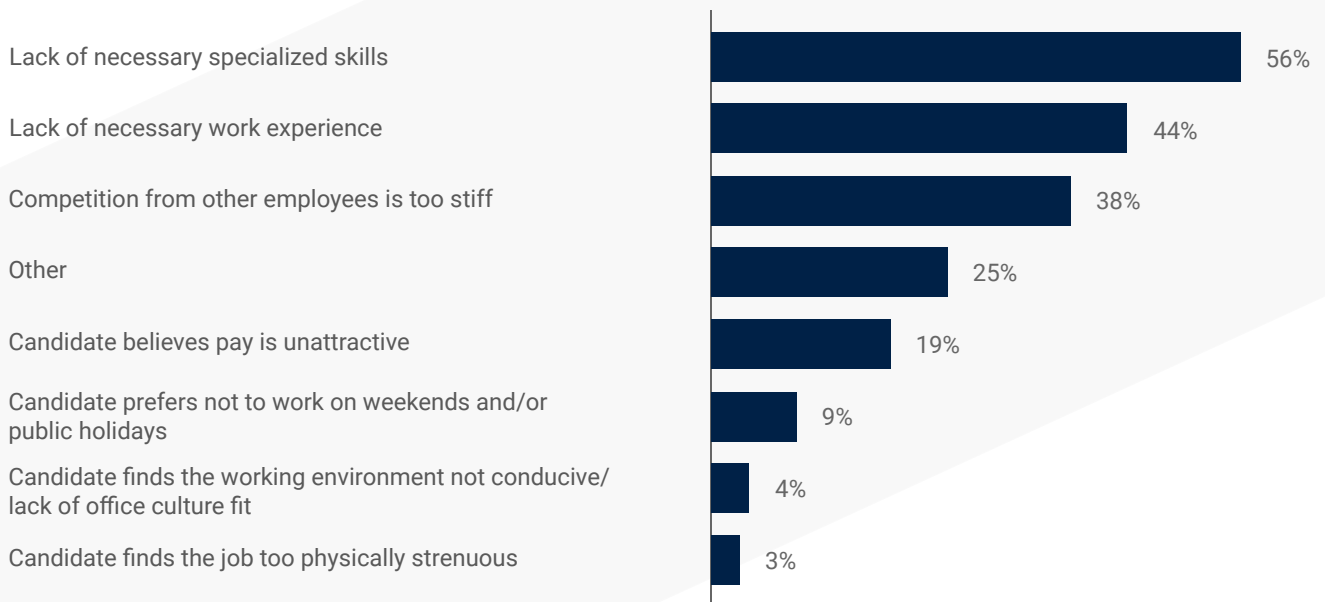| Obstacle	Percentage
Candidate's lack of technical skills and/or knowledge essential for the job	52%
Lack of supply of local candidates	35%
Candidate has unrealistic salary expectations	31%
Candidate has unrealistic promotion and/or advancement expectations	28%
Not applicable - my company did not recruit for entry level roles in 2021	17%
Candidate's lack of previous employment consistency seems to be a "red flag"	13%
Other	13%
Candidate encumbered by poor interview techniques	12%
Candidate's lack of professionalism	8%

For senior level roles, employers are increasingly recruiting local candidates; however, there is stiff competition for talent due to lack of specialized skills and work experience.

Compared to last year, more companies surveyed (60%) have more than half of their senior-level workforce made up of Singapore citizens and PRs. The lack of necessary specialized skills and appropriate experience are the biggest obstacles preventing them from greater hiring of locals, leading to a stiff competition for local talent.

Figure 13. Biggest obstacles to hiring Singaporeans and PRs for senior level roles (answered by companies who reported predominately foreign senior level workforces in Singapore)

Q: What prevents your company from hiring Singaporeans (incl. PRs) in senior level (manager or above) roles within Singapore? (Select all that apply). (n=93)

Obstacle	Percentage
Lack of necessary specialized skills	56%
Lack of necessary work experience	44%
Competition from other employees is too stiff	38%
Other	25%
Candidate believes pay is unattractive	19%
Candidate prefers not to work on weekends and/or public holidays	9%
Candidate finds the working environment not conducive/ lack of office culture fit	4%
Candidate finds the job too physically strenuous	3%

Figure 14. Proportion of total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising Singapore citizens and PRs

Q: What percentage of your total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprises of Singapore citizens (incl. PRs)? (n=93)

30% or less	31% - 50%	51% - 84%	85% or more
14%	26%	33%	27%
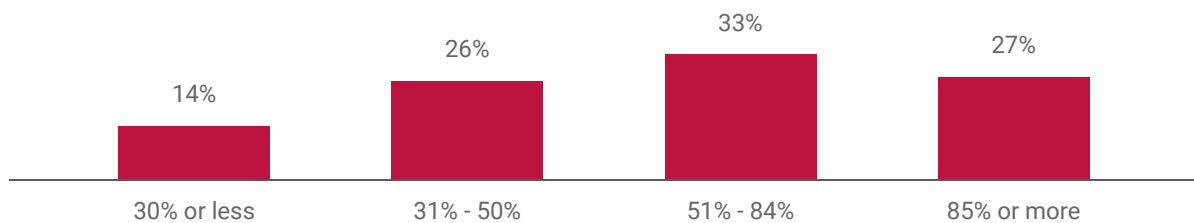
There continue to be a limited number of Singaporeans working in regional leadership roles.

The number of Singaporeans working in regional leadership roles based out of Singapore, and the number of Singaporeans working in senior leadership roles in Southeast Asia remain the same as last year.

Figure 15. Proportion of total current Singaporean and PRs workforce, based in Singapore, working in regional role

Q: Of your total current Singaporean and PR workforce based in Singapore, what percentage work in a regional role? (n=95)

46%	38%	11%	5%

- ■ Less than half of Singaporean workforce in SG work in regional role
- ■ More than half of Singaporean workforce in SG work in regional role
- ■ Not applicable
- ■ Not sure

Figure 16. Proportion of Singaporean and PRs workforce working in senior roles (manager or above) in Southeast Asia (excluding Singapore)

Q: Of your offices in Southeast Asia, excluding Singapore, what percentage has Singaporeans and PRs in a senior level (manager or above) position? (n=94)

40%	14%	36%	10%

- ■ Less than half of Singaporean workforce work in regional senior role
- ■ More than half of half of Singaporean workforce work in regional senior role
- ■ Not applicable
- ■ Not sure

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE
Hybrid Work: Here To Stay, but Not Staying the Same

BD

Contributed by Norbert Modla; Vice President, Human Resources, Greater Asia; Huisin Teo: Market Access & Government Relations Leader, Greater Asia; and Dr. Viva Ma, Director, Strategic Access, Public Affairs, Greater Asia

After almost two years of domestic lockdowns and border restrictions, workers are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic with markedly different mindsets, expectations, and behaviors. After an extended period of working from home, many people have decided their work-life balance has become more important to them. This has contributed to a trend dubbed *"The Great Resignation"*, with a record number of people leaving their jobs since the beginning of the pandemic.

BD, as a med tech leader, is celebrating 125 years of advancing the world of health this year. The pandemic accelerated the uptake of remote work, which has now morphed into hybrid work arrangements. It is clear to us that hybrid work is here to stay. As of Sep 2022, COVID-19 is not done and dusted yet. While some countries are back to normal, others – notably, China – are still under sporadic lockdowns. This means that hybrid work models of today will not remain cast in stone. Rather, the post-pandemic nature of work is still evolving, and our workplace policies must be prepared to evolve too.

What do employees want?
What is hybrid work? BD approached this by first seeking to understand what our associates expect. We talk about market segmentation in the commercial world; through polls and interviews with our associates, we found that we are segmented too. Our initial findings were validated by external research which showed that **the workforce is quite divided in terms of what it wants in a post-COVID-19 world, with different expectations from different segments of employees**.

Question: How often would you like to have paid workdays at home post-Covid?[2]*
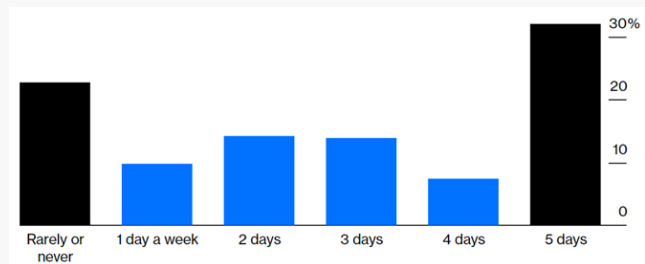
Source: Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes, WFH Research
*Among those who can work from home

Associates with young families prefer options that allow them to work from home more frequently, whereas young graduates are keen to have more social interaction in the office. Leaders are willing to come to the office more frequently to facilitate face-to-face interaction with employees. There are also variations across countries and cities. For instance, in cities that require long commutes or where the traffic is horrendous, associates prefer to save travel time by working from home. Further, there is evidence that hybrid working arrangements are more effective than either end of the spectrum (fully in the office or fully at home). In general, if you give your workers some choice, organizational productivity will increase.

"Responsible Flexibility"

With this information in mind, BD's Leadership Team for Greater Asia sat down together (virtually, at that time) to think through the questions: *"What work culture does BD want to create in a post-COVID-19 environment? What office policies and engagement strategy will foster this culture?"* We landed on the concept of **"Responsible Flexibility"**. This is based on the belief that **flexible ways of working – combined with trust – support a high-performance, results-based work culture where our employees can thrive.** Within this framework, the organization's role is to provide the tools and environment for employees to be productive both in the office and when working remotely, rather than to dictate where people should be working from. From the employee's perspective, the principle of "Responsible Flexibility" allows them to find the best balance between personal productivity and well-being.

Focusing on the quality – rather than quantity – of interaction

Just as everyone was settling into this new working modality, a local news outlet ran a commentary titled *"Don't make employees return to the office to make Zoom calls"*[3] We could not agree more. COVID-19 has made us **rethink how we use our time when we are together versus when we are alone.**

To BD, meaningful interaction means that what we do in the office should be different than what we do at home. It should also be distinctly different than what it used to be, pre-pandemic. While some work activities require being physically present at a work site, simply being present in an office is not an expectation. Rather, time in the office should be planned and purposeful, focused on activities that are best done face-to-face: strategic planning, generating ideas, career conversations etc.

We also made a conscious decision that as a company, we value in-person interaction, in and of itself. There is tremendous value in the informal flow of information and social interaction, such as through bumping into colleagues at the coffee corner and chats over lunch. BD consciously creates meaningful social events through the Women Initiative Network (WIN) and the BD Engagement Action Team (BEAT), both of which are employee resource groups fully managed by associates themselves. For instance, the BEAT team recently organized a Carnivore in Singapore office, where regional leadership members all actively participated, providing networking opportunities and promoting collaboration across functions and businesses.

To sum up, hybrid work is shown to increase productivity, and there is no one right model of hybrid work. Each company will need to decide on the governing and operating principles it wants to establish that are consistent with the company's culture and purpose. For BD, our principle of "Responsible Flexibility" has meant giving employees more choice, while deciding how much and what type of face-to-face interaction is essential. We hope these are useful notes for industry colleagues.

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[2] https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-06-02/are-workers-more-productive-at-home

[3] https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/hybrid-working-home-office-workplace-benefits-collaboration-socialising-productivity-2738806

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE
How to Offer Hybrid-Work Policies Without Causing a Work-Culture Divide

LHH   *Contributed by Product Team at LHH*

The challenge going forward, as some workers choose to return to the pre-pandemic ways of things and others find they'd rather not, is how to ensure that resentments don't build between your in-office and remote or hybrid workers.

It's been shown through the pandemic that employees and companies can function in various working contexts, from location to hours, work attire to means of communication.

The challenge going forward, as some workers choose to return to the pre-pandemic ways of things and others find they'd rather not, is how to ensure that resentments don't build between your in-office and remote or hybrid workers, that policies are established to accommodate all workers, and that no perceptions are created that imply anything other than equal value given to all employees, regardless of where they work.

Achieving this is not impossible, but it does require thoughtful planning and execution. Here are five steps you can take to make this transition go smoothly for everyone.

1. Include employees in creating guidelines that consider all employees. Whether you are working from home or from a company office should not un-level the playing field for employees. When crafting policies such as hours during the day in which all employees are expected to be reachable regardless of location, consider factors such as whether this time gives everyone equal access to management, and whether meetings are taking place at times that are convenient for all attendees. Poll employees about their preferences.

2. Help employees maintain the rhythms that keep them energized during the workday. Throughout the pandemic, people who found themselves working from home developed certain rhythms and preferences. Many people reported taking time mid-day to re-energize with a nap or rest their minds by watching an episode of a television show. People learned to listen to their bodies and minds to discover when they are the most creative, when they need to recharge. It may work against organizations to dismiss these patterns and impose long, arduous work schedules that don't allow for mental health breaks.

3. Relax your dress code. What people wear impacts how engaged and comfortable they feel while performing tasks. While many office jobs imposed professional attire to maintain a formal, work-mode mentality, many people have discovered they operate on the same or even higher levels of focus and productivity in more casual attire. While it may be unreasonable to arrive to work in pajamas, allowing for employees to follow their own unique comfort level when dressing for work, such as permitting jeans, may make a return to the office more appealing.

4. Deliberately plan for more meaningful interaction among all employees. Particularly for younger professionals early in their careers, there can be a sense that not being present in the office is a career killer. Opportunities to speak up in meetings, to make small talk in the hallway, to be physically seen should not lead to direct advantages in career growth for in-office staff. Be mindful of exhibiting any "presence prejudice," by which employees who work in the office are valued more highly (or their work is perceived to be valued more highly) than their remote-work colleagues.

5. Provide the same perks for all employees. Many companies offered financial support to their workers who were suddenly faced with creating a fully functioning office space in their homes during the pandemic. From technical accessories to ergonomic desk chairs, what is provided for in-office staff should be equally provided to your employees at home. If happy hour drinks or in-office gym equipment are treated as perks in employee contracts, find a way to balance these with your farther afield workers. This is all part of creating a culture of having one equally valued team, rather than two camps of workers depending on their preferred work location.

As with most challenges in the workplace, communication, respect for points of view, and transparency are the best tools for ensuring that the return to work, post-pandemic, does not lead to a work-culture war in your organization, but to a deeper level of understanding and respect for employees and leadership.

ATTRACTING TALENT

As we rebound from the disruptions due to COVID, there is a greater optimism in the job market. This optimism continues to be tempered by the gap in capabilities of the workforce.

KEY FINDING 10

In the medium term, companies in Singapore plan to hire more workers or maintain the status quo.

Almost nine in 10 organizations report that they will either expand operations or will maintain status quo. However, compared to last year, more companies plan to maintain the status quo; fewer are looking to expand their hiring.

Figure 17. Outlook of companies in the medium term

Q: Given the current global situation, in the medium term, the Singapore office of my company is going to (n=40):

45%	41%	8%	6%

- Expand & hire more workers
- Stay the same
- Trim jobs to save costs
- Trim jobs to save jobs

Companies express increased optimism about the ability of local universities to prepare graduates for the workforce.

Reversing a three-year decreasing trend, 39% of respondents perceive that Singaporean universities prepare their students "fairly well" for work, a 15% increase from the previous year.

Figure 18. Extent to which Singaporean universities prepare fresh graduates (those graduated less than a year ago) for work

Q: Indicate the extent to which you think Singaporean universities prepare fresh graduates (i.e., those who graduated not more than a year ago) for work in your company. (n=68)

Legend: 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021
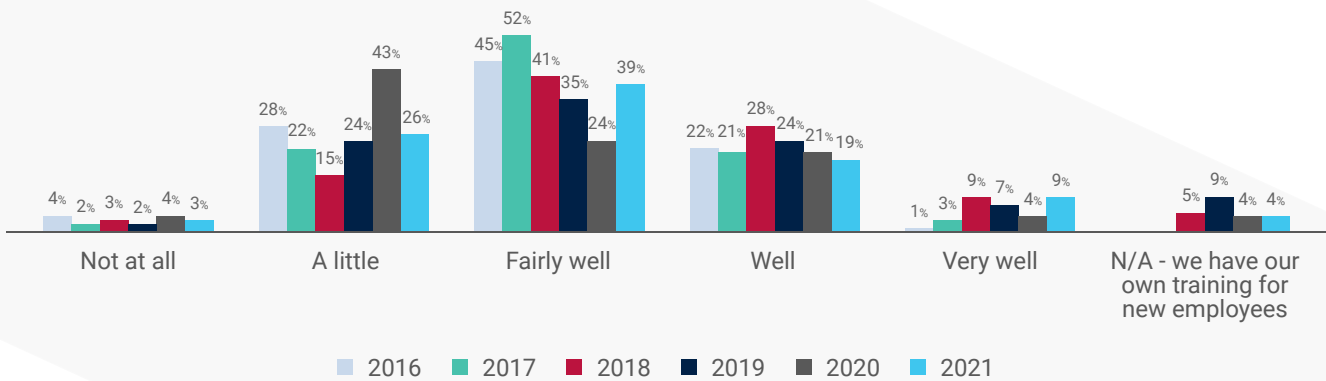
Tech/IT, Sales, Operations and Management positions are the most difficult to recruit locally.

Organizations reports higher recruiting activity in 2021, but Tech/IT, Sales, Operations and Management positions are challenging to fill with local talent. Finance, Marketing, HR and customer service positions are most likely to be filled by local talent.

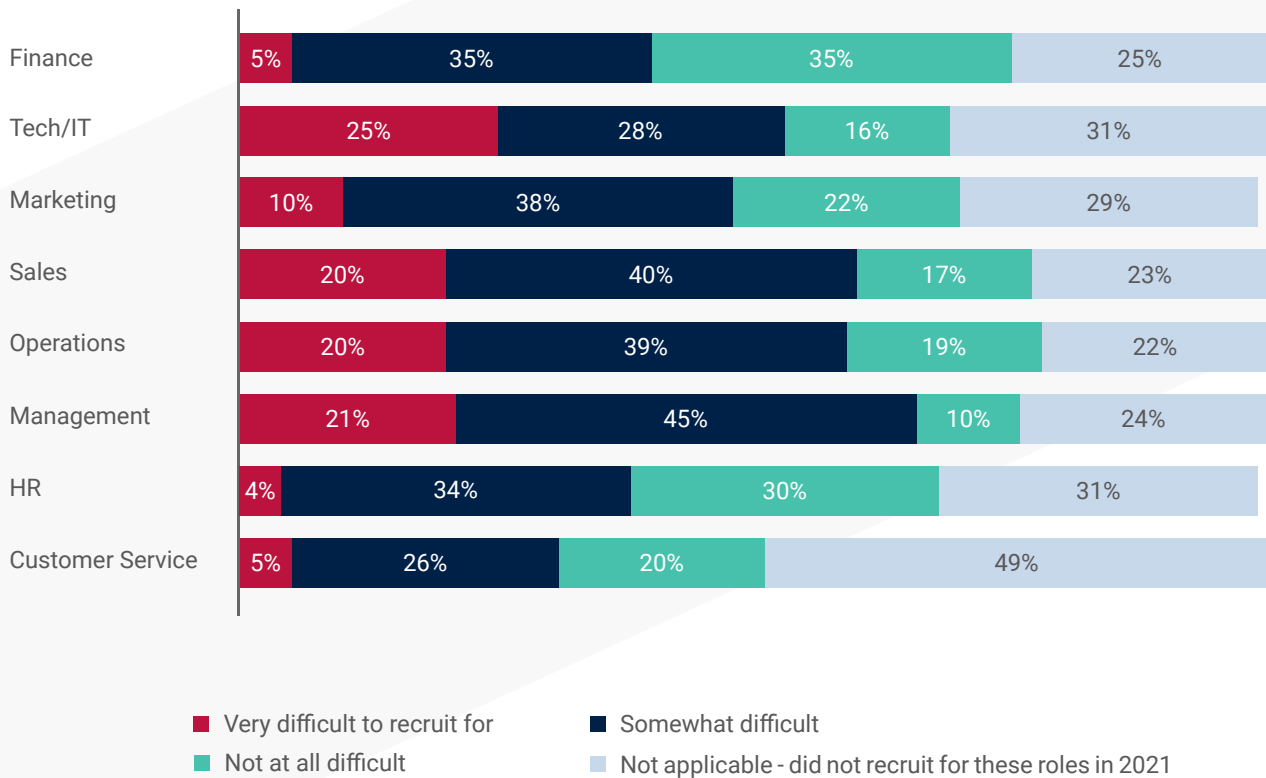**Figure 19. Business sectors finding it most difficult to recruit Singaporeans**

Q: Of the business sectors here, which, if any, has your company had difficulty in recruiting Singaporeans for in 2020? (n=88)
Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Sector	Very difficult to recruit for	Somewhat difficult	Not at all difficult	Not applicable - did not recruit for these roles in 2021
Finance	5%	35%	35%	25%
Tech/IT	25%	28%	16%	31%
Marketing	10%	38%	22%	29%
Sales	20%	40%	17%	23%
Operations	20%	39%	19%	22%
Management	21%	45%	10%	24%
HR	4%	34%	30%	31%
Customer Service	5%	26%	20%	49%

■ Very difficult to recruit for
■ Somewhat difficult
■ Not at all difficult
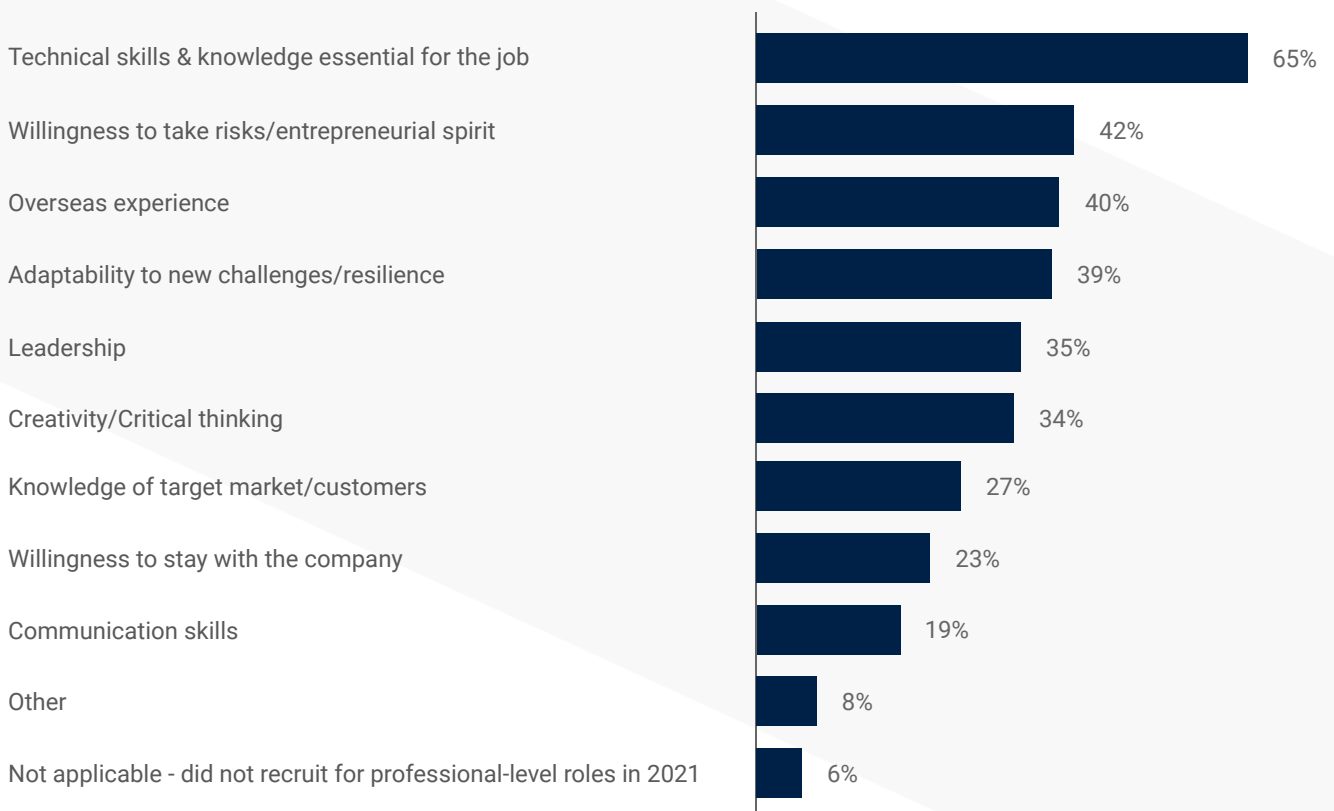■ Not applicable - did not recruit for these roles in 2021

KEY FINDING 13

Creativity and Critical thinking is less of a challenge among Singaporeans; lack of technical skill gaps is a greater challenge.

Among local mid- to senior-level talent, essential technical skills are the hardest to find.

Figure 20. Skillsets/attributes difficult to find among Singaporean professionals with more than five years of experience which result in hiring foreigners for those roles

Q: What are the skillsets and/or attributes that are difficult to find among Singaporean professionals with more than five years of experience that specifically result in your company hiring foreigners for those roles? (Select all that apply or not applicable) (n=88)

Skillset/attribute	Percentage
Technical skills & knowledge essential for the job	65%
Willingness to take risks/entrepreneurial spirit	42%
Overseas experience	40%
Adaptability to new challenges/resilience	39%
Leadership	35%
Creativity/Critical thinking	34%
Knowledge of target market/customers	27%
Willingness to stay with the company	23%
Communication skills	19%
Other	8%
Not applicable - did not recruit for professional-level roles in 2021	6%

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE
Dealing With Cognitive Biases Around Talent Management

Contributed by Evelyn Chow, Founder & Managing Director at DecodeHR

A study by the British Psychological Society found that almost two-thirds of job interviewers made up their minds about candidates within the first 15 minutes – some even in the first 5 minutes.

Relying on first impressions is just one example of cognitive bias.

Cognitive bias arises when our brain uses shortcuts – heuristics – to make quick decisions. It helps us save time and energy from the abundant stream of information. But often times, bias occurs unconsciously. Being aware of and understanding cognitive bias is essential to ensure we develop a robust and effective talent management strategy.

Here are some biases that have a significant impact on how organisations attract and develop talent.

Confirmation Bias
A well-known bias is confirmation bias. It occurs when people have a preset conviction and unconsciously focus only on information that confirms their beliefs while failing to see arguments that contradict these firmly held beliefs. This bias leads to people making decisions based on an incomplete picture. It affects their flexibility and objective eye. Hence, we should strive to be open to other perspectives, ideas and feedback – both negative and positive.

Group Thinking
'Groupthink' is a phenomenon that can cause teams or organisations to make poor decisions or settle for lesser solutions. Whether it happens because team members prioritise group harmony, lack diversity or feel that they are not sufficiently qualified, group thinking leads to an environment where perspectives are not challenged. But innovation needs a critical eye. We can overcome group thinking by breaking meetings into small groups when possible, asking for dissenting opinions, rewarding creativity and nurturing an open, constructive workplace culture.

Pygmalion Effect
The Pygmalion effect happens when management's expectations of their workers' abilities influence how workers view themselves and perform. This effect is interesting because managers may unconsciously treat workers differently based on, for example, whether they regard them as high performing or not.

To illustrate: A recruiter is about to interview a prospective software engineer. Before the interview, the recruiter discovers that the engineer had quit from another company after one month. This may lead the recruiter to believe that the candidate is not a good fit in terms of company culture or commitment.

That said, the opposite also rings true. If a hiring manager discovers something positive about a candidate, he or she may unconsciously focus on the

candidate's strong points and overlook the weak. Either way, we should remind ourselves to be self-aware and objective.

The Halo effect

The halo effect occurs from our tendencies to make overall judgements of someone based on one positive trait. We should be mindful of this, as it can lead to unfair treatment. For example, a recruiter interviewing a well-spoken person assumes this person must also be eloquent in their writing abilities. Using standardised interviews can help us stay objective. We must be aware of these subtle biases to guarantee a fair recruitment process and, ultimately, the most suitable selection.

Gender Bias

This topic has been receiving a lot of attention and needs no introduction. Women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers in Singapore and many parts of the world today. This gender imbalance is amplified in STEM related research and development, where women comprise only 20% of the workforce. Even though Singapore was ranked 8th in the 2021 Global Innovation Index, it only ranked 34th in creative output and 36th in the percentage of females employed in knowledge-intensive services.

STEM fields with large gender gaps in representation also tend to have a strong masculine culture, which is characterised by stereotypes about the field, negative gender stereotypes and few female role models. These factors have been shown to contribute to women feeling a lower sense of belonging and belief they can succeed in these fields. Accordingly, women show less interest in entering and pursuing a career in these sectors, further reinforcing the bias that men are more suitable for such jobs.

The workspace should be a safe space for all employees regardless of gender.

Mentorship and having non-stereotypic role models are both impactful in the recruitment and retention of females in the STEM field. Inclusive and flexible working practices that support parents are also effective ways of closing the gender gap.

All in all we should be aware of our biases and their influence on our perception and judgment so as to improve diversity in the workplace. When it comes to recruiting talent, having a standardised selection process, for example, using structured interviews and consistent assessment tools, will keep us objective and help us make optimum decisions. The same principle should apply to employee development programmes.

It is all the more pertinent to be cognizant of these biases today, as more companies embrace hybrid work models. Effective leaders need to be mindful not to over-value employees who are physically present, while unconsciously overlooking others when it comes to growth or promotion opportunities. Being aware of such biases is the first step in being able to proactively and successfully mitigate this issue.

Stem Gender Gap in Singapore (https://www.ntu.edu.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/powers/ntu_powers_stemgendergapinsingapore.pdf?sfvrsn=a2f34ed0_3)%20NTU_POWERS_STEMGenderGapInSingapore%20.pdf)

Gender Bias in STEM: Women in Tech Still Facing Discrimination (https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2020/03/04/gender-bias-in-stem-women-in-tech-report-facing-discrimination/?sh=70d1c54170fb)

Understanding cognitive bias in the workplace (https://www.successfinder.com/definition-bias-examples-workplace/)

7 Practical Ways to Reduce Bias in Your Hiring Process (https://hbr.org/2017/06/7-practical-ways-to-reduce-bias-in-your-hiring-process)

Cognitive Biases That Ruin Your Workplace & How to Beat Them (https://screencloud.com/blog/cognitive-biases-workplace)

How quickly do interviewers reach decisions? (https://bpspsychub.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joop.12118)
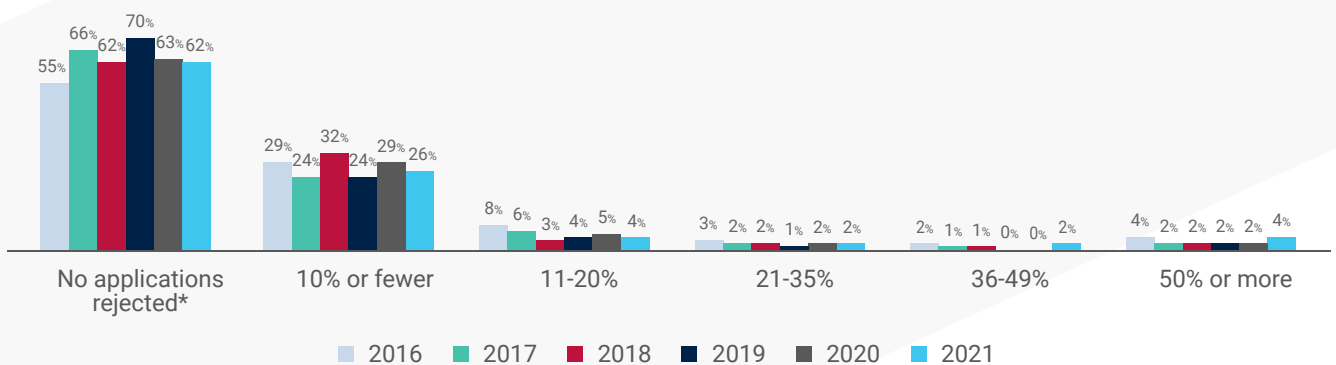
WORK PASS APPLICATION

The Singapore government has introduced new regulations to promote the hiring of local talent, while attracting skilled talent from abroad. This includes changes to the qualifying salary and a points-based Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS). These changes are reflective of Singapore's positioning as an attractive place for talent to flow while continuing to strengthen the local Singapore talent.

KEY FINDING 14

Work pass rejection rates have remained consistent overall, however companies are reporting increased rejection rates for S-Passes. Awareness of work pass application requirements and available resources remains consistent.

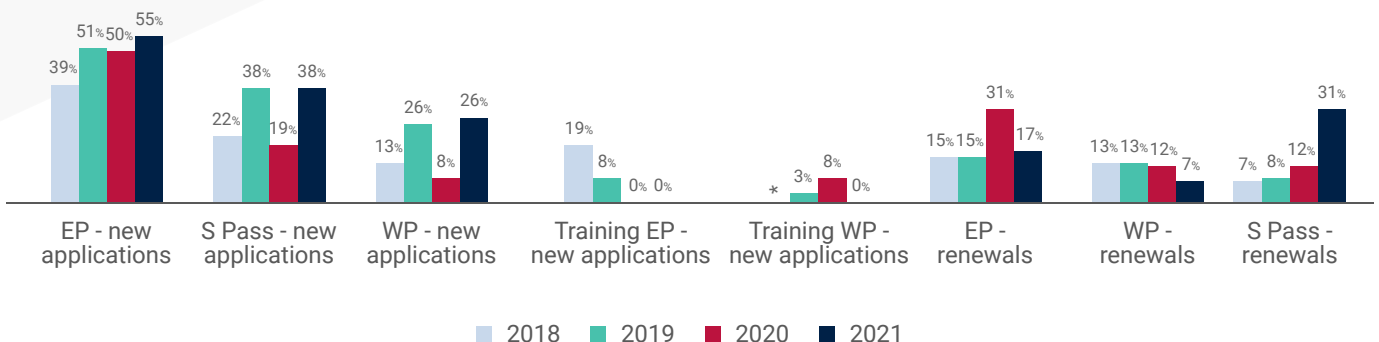**Figure 21. Percentage of submitted work pass applications rejected**

Q: What percentage of your submitted work pass applications have been rejected? (n=85)
Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Legend: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No applications rejected*	55%	66%	62%	70%	63%	62%
10% or fewer	29%	24%	32%	24%	29%	26%
11-20%	8%	6%	3%	4%	5%	4%
21-35%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
36-49%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%
50% or more	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%

*For 2018 and 2019, percentages in this category include companies who did not submit work pass applications that year AND had no applications rejected.

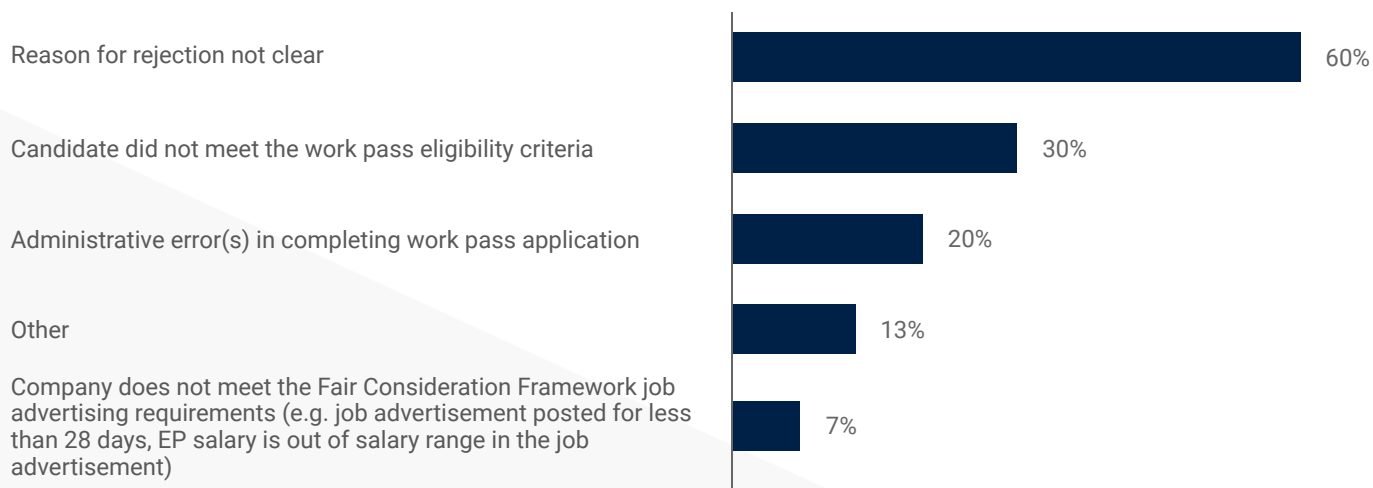**Figure 22. Classifications of work pass applications rejected**

Q: Which classifications of work pass applications were rejected this year? (Select all that apply). (n=29)

Legend: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Category	2018	2019	2020	2021
EP - new applications	39%	51%	50%	55%
S Pass - new applications	22%	38%	19%	38%
WP - new applications	13%	26%	8%	26%
Training EP - new applications	19%	8%	0%	0%
Training WP - new applications	*	3%	8%	0%
EP - renewals	15%	15%	31%	17%
WP - renewals	13%	13%	12%	7%
S Pass - renewals	7%	8%	12%	31%

*Data not available for 2018

Figure 23. Reasons given for work pass rejections

Q: What was the reason given for the rejection of applied work passes? (Select all that apply). (n=30)

Reason	%
Reason for rejection not clear	60%
Candidate did not meet the work pass eligibility criteria	30%
Administrative error(s) in completing work pass application	20%
Other	13%
Company does not meet the Fair Consideration Framework job advertising requirements (e.g. job advertisement posted for less than 28 days, EP salary is out of salary range in the job advertisement)	7%

Figure 24. Use of MOM resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying

Q: Has your company used any of MOM's resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying in 2020? (n=83)
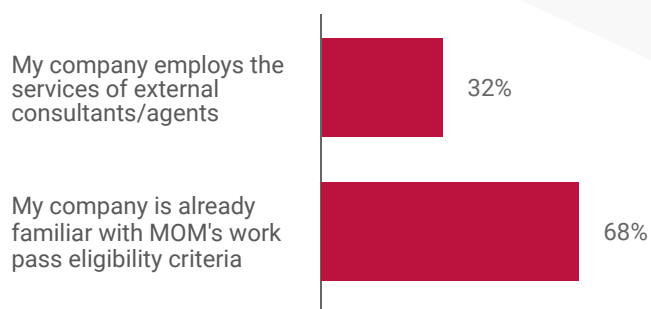*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

63%	25%	12%

- ■ Yes – my company used MOM resources prior to applying
- ■ My company submitted applications for WP, but did not use any MOM resources prior to applying
- ■ My company did not recruit foreigners in 2020, and therefore did not need to determine WP eligibility
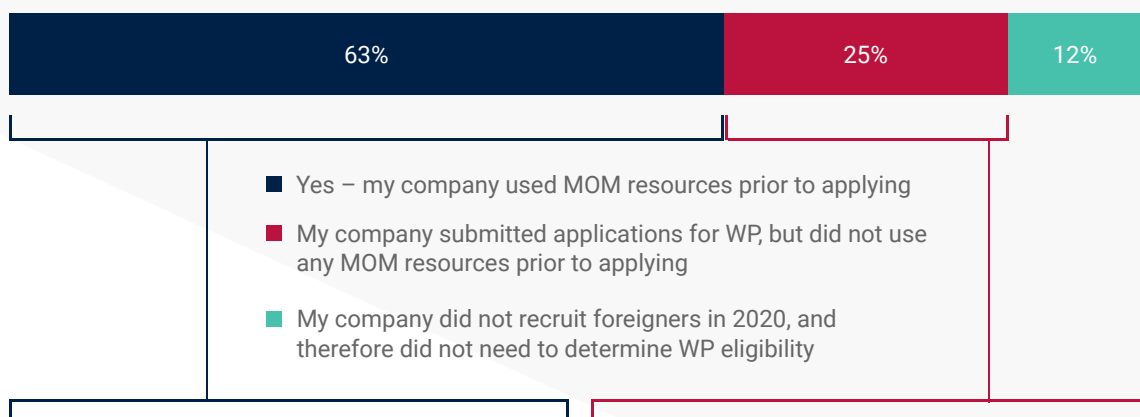
Figure 25. MOM resources used in 2021

Q: Which MOM resources did your company use in 2021? (Select all that apply). (n=88)

Resource	%
MOM's Online Self Assessment Tool (SAT)	49%
Contacted MOM directly	24%
Not sure	18%
MOM website, excluding SAT	6%
Other MOM resources	3%
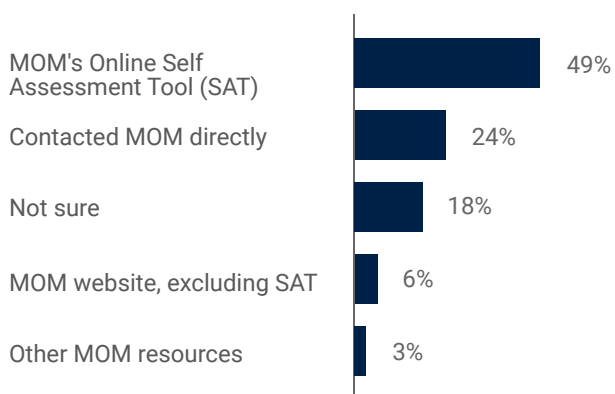
Figure 26. Reasons for not using MOM resources

Q: What is the main reason your company did not use any MOM resources prior to applying? (Select all that apply). (n=22)

Reason	%
My company employs the services of external consultants/agents	32%
My company is already familiar with MOM's work pass eligibility criteria	68%

Even as companies are still becoming familiar with the COMPASS Framework, it is perceived positively as allowing companies to access talent required for their success.

Companies express a positive sentiment about the COMPASS framework as an improvement over the existing Employment Pass Framework. It is largely seen as transparent, providing predictability, certainty and transparency for manpower planning leading to the company's success.

Figure 27. Familiarity with Complementarity Assessment (COMPASS) Framework

Q: Are you familiar with how the points-based scoring system under the Complementarity Assessment (COMPASS) Framework works? (n=93)

31%	36%	33%

■ Familiar ■ Somewhat familiar ■ Not familiar
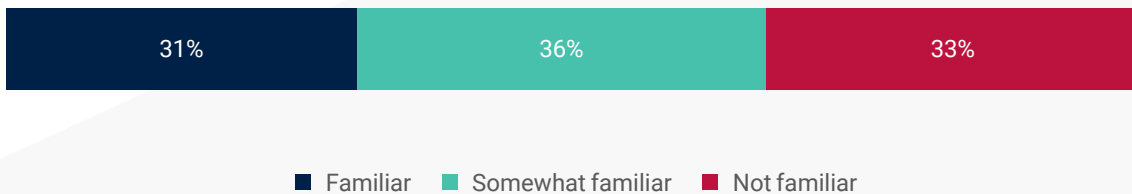
Figure 28. Transparency of Complementarity Assessment (COMPASS) Framework

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "The requirements of COMPASS are transparent, and will give my business more predictability, certainty and transparency for manpower planning."? (n=90)

39%	47%	14%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No
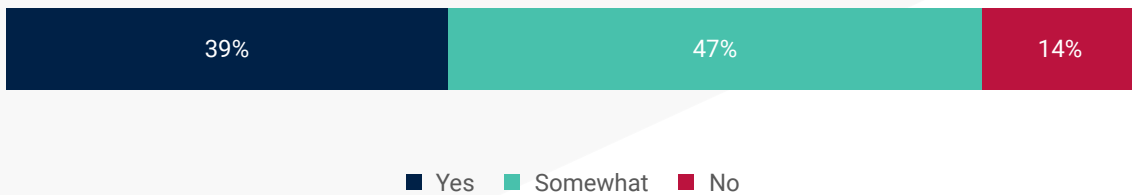
Figure 29. Improvement to Employment Pass Framework

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "The introduction of COMPASS framework is an improvement over the current Employment Pass framework."? (n=89)

29%	51%	20%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No
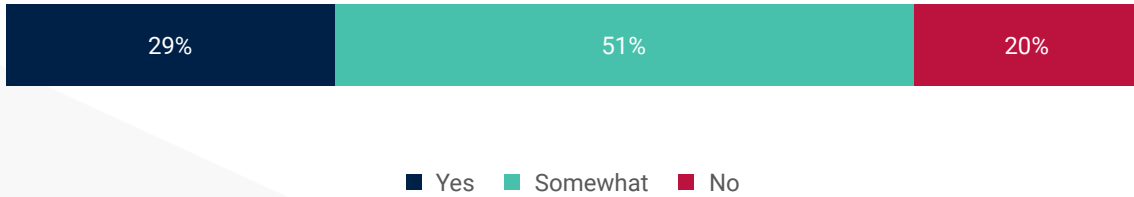
Figure 30. Confidence in Complementarity Assessment (COMPASS) Framework

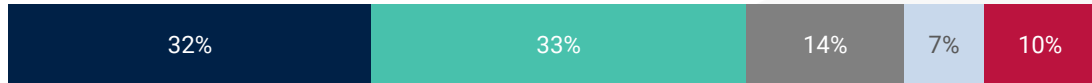Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "I am confident that my business will be able to access the talent it requires to succeed under COMPASS."? (n=85)

43%	45%	12%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No
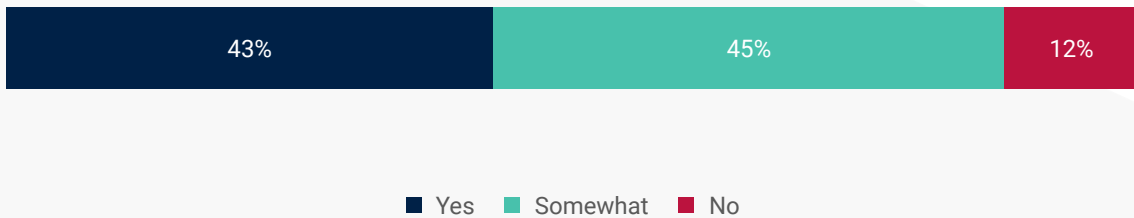
The increases in EP and S pass qualifying salaries has not had significant adverse impact on companies.

Figure 31. Impact of Changes to EP and S Pass Holders

Q: What has been the impact of the increase in minimum qualifying salary for EP and S Pass Holders to your company's bottom line? (n=73)

32%	33%	14%	7%	10%

■ Not at all   ■ Very little   ■ Somewhat   ■ Quite a bit   ■ A great deal

Figure 32. Stance on Employment Pass Qualifying Salary

Q: Do you agree with the following statement: "I agree with the benchmark for Employment Pass qualifying salary at the top one-third of local PMETs."? (n=88)

46%	45%	9%

■ Yes   ■ Somewhat   ■ No

Figure 33. Awareness of Specialized Work Passes

Q: Beyond the Employment Pass, are you aware of the suite of specialized work passes (including the Personalized Employment Pass, EntrePass, and Tech Pass) that cater to businesses that need to bring in global talent? (n=88)
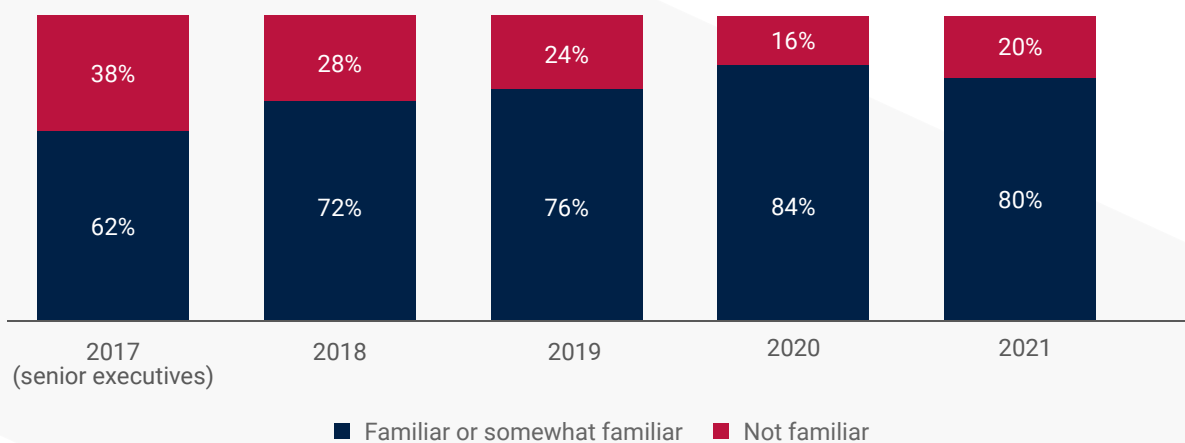
74%	26%

■ Yes   ■ No

Familiarity with the Fair Consideration Framework continues to be steady. Most organizations report being familiar with the government's Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) requirements.

Most organizations report being familiar with the government's Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) requirements.

Figure 34. Familiarity with the Fair Consideration Framework

Q: Are you familiar with the Fair Consideration Framework? (n=93)

	2017 (senior executives)	2018	2019	2020	2021
Not familiar	38%	28%	24%	16%	20%
Familiar or somewhat familiar	62%	72%	76%	84%	80%

■ Familiar or somewhat familiar   ■ Not familiar

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE
On Demand Pay – A Key Enabler of the Hybrid World

ramco

This piece is authored by Ramco Systems, a global enterprise software company providing next-gen Global Payroll, ERP, Aviation and Aerospace & Defense solutions.

Over the last decade, the business world has witnessed massive changes across many fronts, including the critical HR realm. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated some changes that will likely continue over the long term. First, it has made employers adopt more employee-centric practices as they acknowledge that employees are critical to their success. On the other hand, employees are becoming more vocal about their expectations, including remote working, flexibility in work practices, focus on financial well-being and financial education, self-service options, an enriched learning environment and amplified experience.

Organizations should now examine each expectation and HR practice and focus on those that add value to the organization and the employee. As a result, HR practitioners must juggle many more responsibilities.

For example, addressing financial well-being and flexible work practices are emerging concepts that organizations are paying attention to. A major factor for that is the recent pandemic during which many individuals underwent financial stress. As a result, employees preferred accessing their salaries whenever required rather than on a set schedule. What started as an exigency measure during this period is now a regular practice. Those employers who fail to provide such flexibility risk employee dissatisfaction. According to a 2022 PwC study, almost 80% of US employees will opt for employers who care for their financial well-being. Closer home in Singapore, 40% of

employers in an Aon survey said financial well-being is more important than physical or mental health. So, clearly, on-demand pay is here to stay.

What does on-demand pay entail? Simply put, it allows employees to receive wages as they earn instead of a scheduled, periodic pay out. In other words, it is real-time pay, for which employers are not geared, as wage computation is seldom done on a real-time basis. Traditionally, employees could avail of salary advances in case of exigencies; however, the process was long, manual and tedious. Ramco Global Payroll's internal data shows that as much as 40% of the monthly tasks of any payroll employee revolve around advance salary disbursement.

That's where technology solutions can help. Payroll software has evolved and automated manual processing of advance salary disbursement enabling organizations to compute wages owed to an employee, after deducting tax, every day in real-time. This payment is credited to the employee's bank account or payment card.

Next-gen tech vendors like Ramco Systems have recognized these shifts in the business environment and taken the necessary steps to augment their global payroll solution.

Ramco is partnering with new-age fintech start-ups to provide financial well-being programs such as earned wage access, salary advances and personal loans to

its APAC clientele. Its global payroll platform provides easy and smooth integrations with these solution providers. It enables organisations to offer real-time pay tracking, flexible pay, money coaching and other related solutions.

These fintech solutions will not only enable organisations to disburse advance salaries with tax computations but also not impact their cash reserves with any upfront payments. After all, too many advance payments can impact any business's liquidity and performance.

However, like any other new concept, implementing on-demand pay is not without problems. It requires reconciling the wages with the time logged in case of hourly pay before the advance salary is paid out. Ramco's Payroll system enables these fintech partners to access real-time information about employees' attendance and employment status, which makes advance salary disbursement quick, easy and error-free. With such evolved payroll tech solutions, organizations can cater to the demands of the modern workforce.

On-demand pay is one example of how technology is shaping the HR organization. Many more that can add tremendous value in enhancing employee wellness and safety and hybrid work environments. Self-service solutions will dominate as companies look to empower a younger workforce. AI will play a big role in recruitment, learning and development and to monitor employee productivity, performance and engagement more meaningfully.

As employee experiences take on different shades, HR organisations must stay tuned to the changes and act on them soon so that their employees continue to enjoy a good experience. But again, with the stakes raised high in the employee attraction and retention space, companies must rely on technology to help establish a leadership position.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Sourced from AmCham's membership, 89 senior executives completed the 2022 Manpower Survey. Both MNCs and SMEs are represented in the survey, with most respondents from the services sector. The survey was open for responses from June 9 – August 16, 2022.

Company Size[4]
MNCs: 70%
SMEs: 30%

Primary Sector
Services: 68%
Manufacturing: 21%
Others: 11%

Profile of HR Teams in Respondent Companies:

How many employees are on your HR team?

None	16%
1-5 employees	37%
6-10 employees	9%
11-20 employees	9%
More than 20 employees	29%

What activities do your HR team undertake from Singapore? (Select all that apply).

Employee experience & relations	88%
Perfomance and rewards	87%
Talent attraction	82%
Talent management	79%
HR business partner	79%
Organization development & learning	64%
Ops & technology	45%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	23%

What is the geographical mandate of your HR team in Singapore? Select the largest scope applicable.

Singapore only	15%
Southeast Asia (including Singapore)	15%
Asia-Pacific (including Singapore)	37%
Global	16%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	18%

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[4] The Singapore Government defines SMEs by the following criteria: Company group annual sales turnover not more than S$100 million OR global employment size not more than 200 workers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT AMCHAM SINGAPORE

Established in 1973, the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore (AmCham Singapore) is the largest and the most active international business association in Singapore and Southeast Asia, with over 4,700 members representing nearly 600 companies. Our Chamber comprises 14 industry-specific committees: seven sectoral and seven functional.

AmCham is a forward-thinking, business-progressive association. Our mission is to create value for our members by providing advocacy, business insights, and connections. Our membership includes American companies and Singaporean and third-country companies with significant U.S. business interests. AmCham is an independent, non-partisan business organization. We are a member of the 28-chamber-strong AmChams of Asia Pacific.

Our goal is to provide the information and facilitate the access and connections that give members insight into the local, regional, and global operating environment, enhance their four professional capabilities, and enable them to make well-informed business decisions. For more information about AmCham Singapore, visit www.amcham.com.sg.

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