



AmCham
SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE

2020 MANPOWER SURVEY RESULTS

**Inclusivity in the Workplace Amid
Global Uncertainty**

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INTRODUCTION

Since the start of 2020, COVID-19 has spread to nearly 190 countries with disruptions permeating all aspects of life around the world. In addition to the heightened need for medical equipment and healthcare services, disruptions range from the challenges of creating a new environment for remote workforces; logistics and supply chain interruptions; and a surge of reliance on digital/remote technologies.

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, Singapore had forecasted talent gaps in the workforce. With a relatively small population of about 5.6 million people, Singapore has looked beyond its borders to find equilibrium in the supply-and-demand of workers in the domestic job market. As of 2019, there are nearly 400,000 foreign professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMET) out of 1.43 million¹ in Singapore's foreign workforce² in addition to the approximate 2.3 million in the resident labor force.³

Between April 20 and May 10, 2020, the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore (AmCham Singapore) conducted a survey of its members to understand the recruitment and retention issues facing firms, the balance of foreigners in the local workforce, the prioritization of inclusivity in the workplace, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on business operations and HR practices.

¹ 1,427,500 according to Singapore's Ministry of Manpower as of 2019. Includes Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) and those in construction.

² Ministry of Manpower, "Foreign workforce numbers," (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/documents-and-publications/foreign-workforce-numbers>).

³ Ministry of Manpower, "Summary Table: Labour Force," (<https://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Labour-Force-Summary-Table.aspx>).

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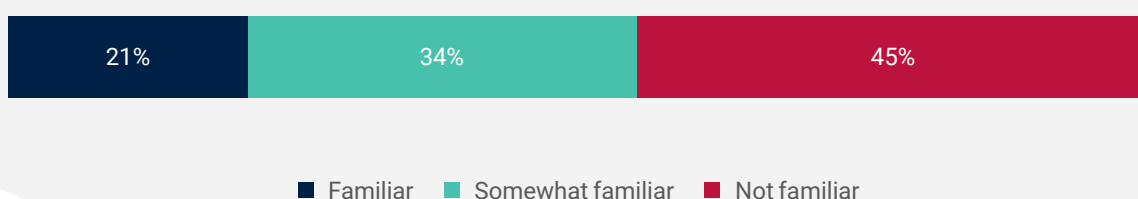
INCLUSIVE WORKFORCES

Inclusive workforces are more important than ever. In times of recession, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, marginalized groups of workers who are more likely to be negatively affected by disruptions and to be at risk of being “left behind once again”.⁴ These groups include women, older workers, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), among others, as classified by the International Labour Organisation⁵. While “focusing on maximizing the value of a diverse workforce has almost become a business imperative,”⁶ just as important is fostering an inclusive workplace.

KEY FINDING 1

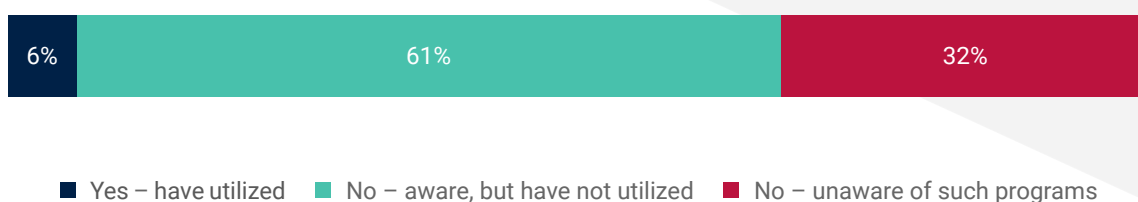
Companies report low awareness and utilization around government programs to support inclusivity.

Figure 1. Familiarity with SG Enable



Q: Are you familiar with SG Enable?

Figure 2. Utilization of any government programs or funding to support employment of PWDs



Q: Has your company utilized any govt' programs or funding to support employment of PWDs?

⁴International Labour Organisation, “Persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 response”, (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_741287.pdf)

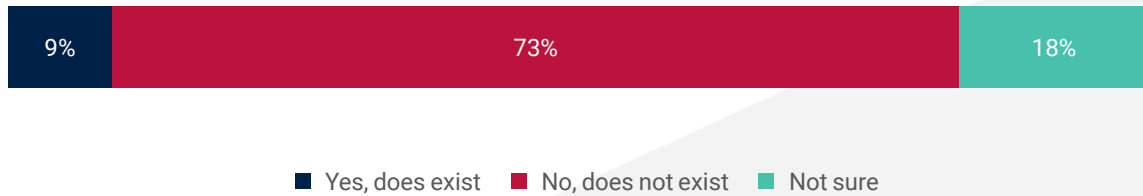
⁵International Labour Organisation, “The ILO’s policy framework to respond to the COVID-19 crisis” (https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/impacts-and-responses/WCMS_739047/lang-en/index.htm)

⁶Service Futures, “Diversity is nothing without an inclusive workplace culture” (<https://www.servicefutures.com/diversity-nothing-without-inclusive-workplace-culture>)

KEY FINDING 2

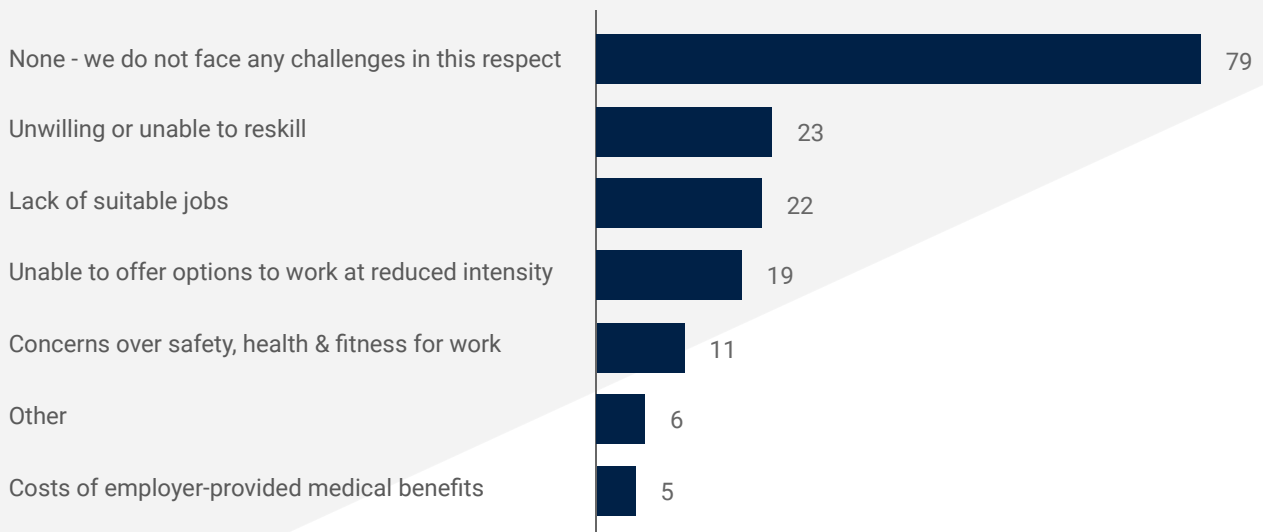
Most do not report a gender pay gap or age-related challenges in hiring and retention.

Gender:
Figure 3. Perceived existence of gender pay gap within company



Q: To the best of your knowledge, does a gender pay gap exist in your company?

Age:
Figure 4. Challenges faced with hiring & retaining Singapore citizens & Permanent Residents 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).

KEY FINDING 3

Policies promoting inclusive workforces are company-driven, and to a lesser degree, employee-driven.

Figure 5. Incorporation of non-discrimination policies into company's hiring or retention practices



■ Yes, these policies are incorporated ■ No, these policies are not formally incorporated ■ Not sure

Q: Does your company have any non-discrimination policies formally incorporated into their hiring or retention practices?

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups which aim to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace, while also aligning with the organization's overall mission, values, and business practices.⁷ Such groups can play an integral part in facilitating inclusiveness, driven directly from the employees themselves.

Figure 6. Support or funding for ERGs



■ Yes, my company formally supports or funds ERGs ■ No, my company does not formally support or fund ERGs ■ Not sure

Q: Does your company formally support or fund any ERGs for their employees?

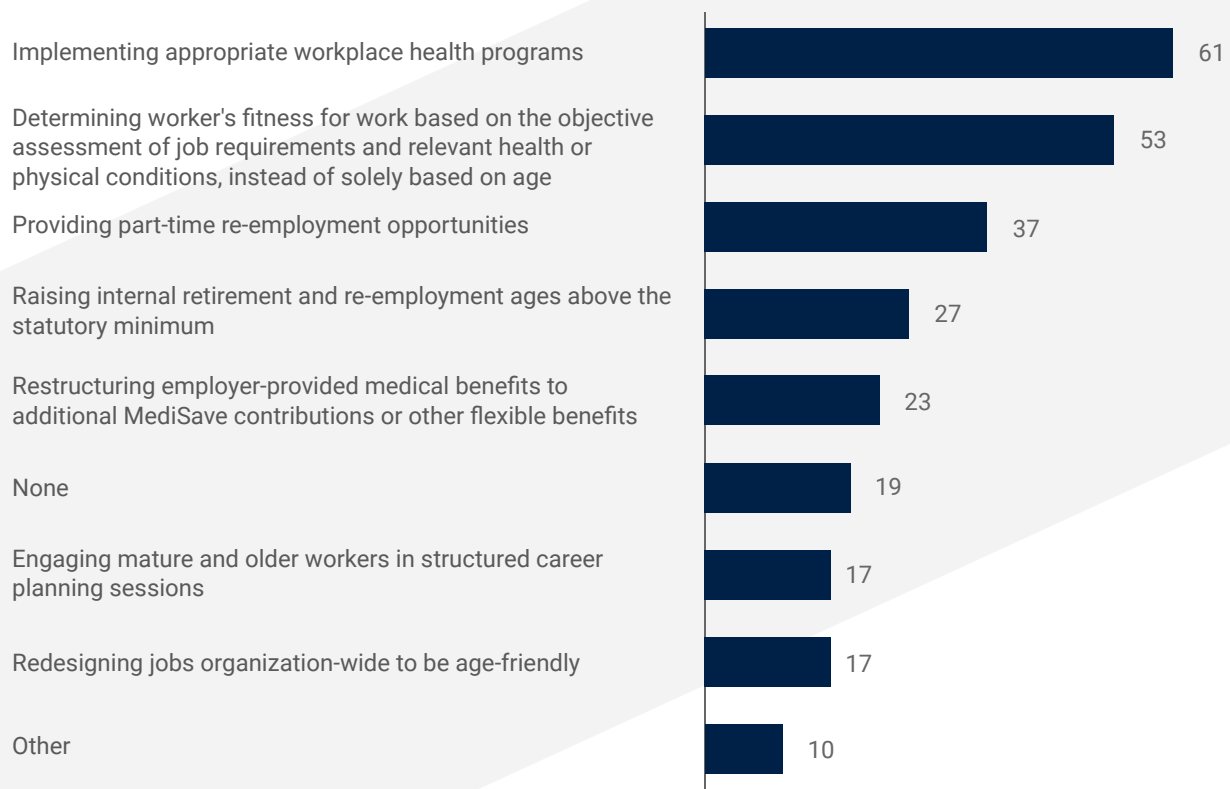
⁷Catalyst, "Employee Resource Groups," (<https://www.catalyst.org/topics/ergs/>).

KEY FINDING 4

Companies are prioritizing workplace health in order to create an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace.

Almost all respondents, save 15%, report that their companies have official measures in place to foster an inclusive workforce and progressive workplace. Nearly half (48%) say that workplace health programs have been implemented, while 42% say that their company supports inclusivity by determining worker's fitness for the role by objective requirements that do not include age.

Figure 7. 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).

COVID-19

In Q1 of 2020, total employment⁸ in Singapore registered the sharpest quarterly contraction since the SARS epidemic in 2003, due in large part to a significant decline in foreign employment.⁹ The Singapore Government has stepped up with various measures to mitigate the impact of the contraction and has focused on helping workers remain employed, especially in sectors severely affected by COVID-19.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat announced the Unity Budget on February 18, 2020, with S\$6.4 billion set aside for pandemic-related assistance. The supplementary Resilience Budget on March 26 earmarked another S\$48.4 billion,¹⁰ and on April 6, an additional S\$5.1 billion was unveiled in the Solidarity Budget to help support families through the Circuit Breaker phase between April 7 and May 4.¹¹ Although announced after the close of this survey, the latest Fortitude Budget allocated S\$33 billion primarily to help workers and businesses through the COVID-19 crisis.¹²

All four budgets included a Jobs Support Scheme to provide wage support, SkillsFuture credit top-up for all qualified Singaporeans, a support package to help employers retain senior workers, assistance for mid-career employees, and a COVID-19 Support Grant for unemployed lower- and middle-income workers, among other provisions. The Solidarity Budget also stipulated government funding to pay 75% of the first S\$4,600 of monthly salaries for all local employees for April 2020. The survey shows companies have found these measures helpful in retaining workers, particularly those in the manufacturing industry.

⁸Excluding Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs).

⁹Ministry of Manpower, "Labour Market Advance Release First Quarter 2020" (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-releases/2020/0429-labour-market-advance-release-1q-2020>)

¹⁰Royston Sim, Straits Times, "Singapore Govt pumps in \$48.4b more to fight Covid-19 fallout, on top of \$6.4b already announced" (<https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/singapores-aviation-and-tourism-sectors-most-badly-hit-by-coronavirus-pandemic-dpm-heng>)

¹¹Lim Yan Liang, "Third round of support measures in Solidarity Budget today" (<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/third-round-of-support-measures-in-solidarity-budget-today>)

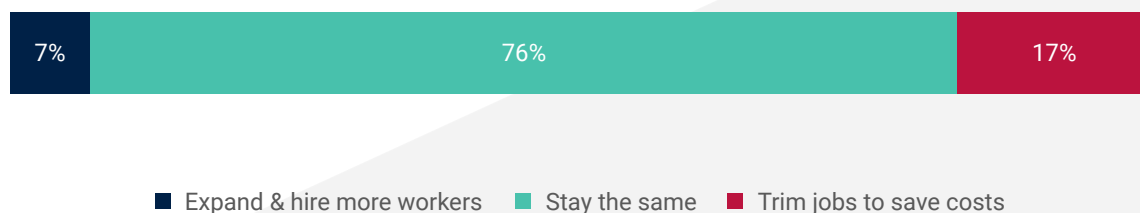
¹²Lim Yan Liang, "\$33b set aside in Fortitude Budget, bringing Singapore's Covid-19 war chest to nearly \$100 billion" (<https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-33-billion-set-aside-in-fortitude-budget-bringing-covid-19-war-chest-to-nearly>)

KEY FINDING 5

In the medium term, companies in Singapore continue to retain workers, in part because of fiscal support from the Government.

Despite the implications for the global economy as a result of COVID-19, 83% of respondents say that they will either retain employees or expand and hire more workers during this time (Figure 8).

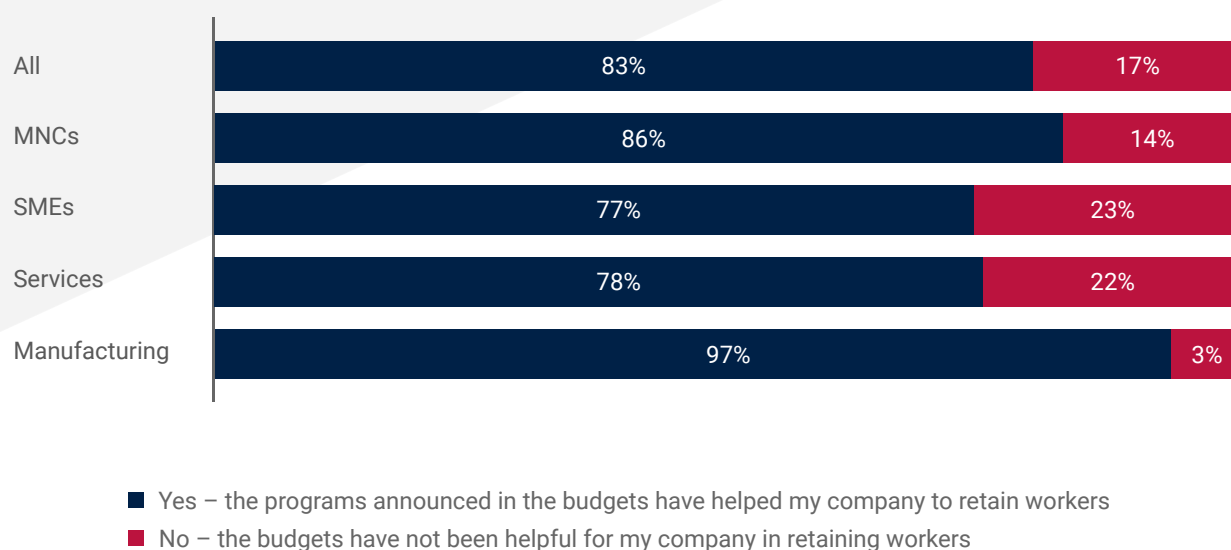
Figure 8. Outlook of companies in the medium term



Q: Given the current global situation, in the medium term, the Singapore office of my company is going to (n=110):

The Singapore Government has quickly reacted to the economic effects of COVID-19 by rolling out relief measures through the Unity, Resilience, and Solidarity budgets. These budgets, captured in this survey, have been well-received by the business community with 83% of surveyed firms reporting that they find the support useful in helping them retain workers (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Unity, Resilience & Solidarity budgets and worker retention



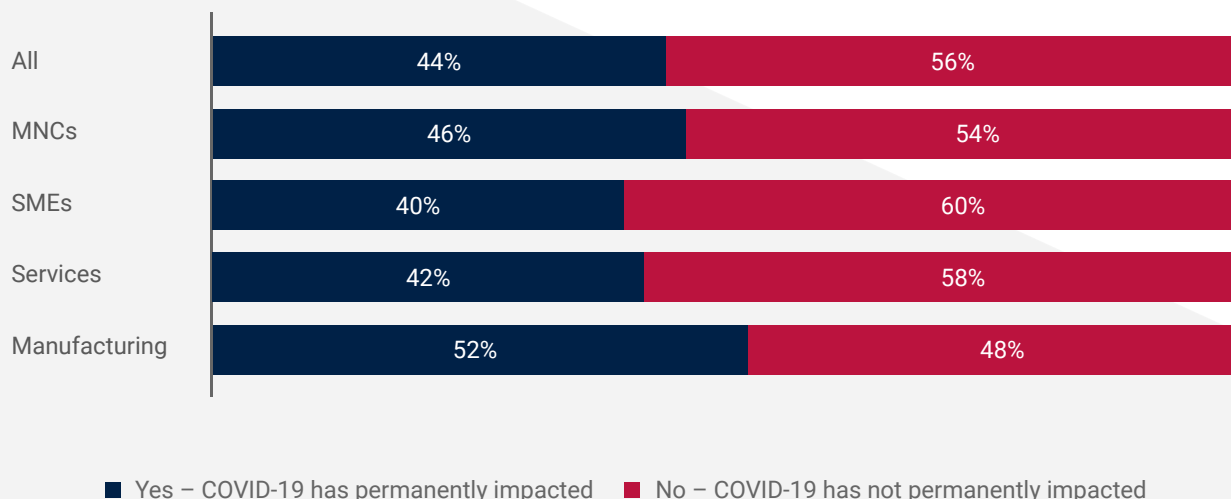
Q: Have the government programs announced in the Unity, Resilience & Solidarity budgets been useful in helping your business retain workers during this time?

KEY FINDING 6

While many companies are enabling employees to work remotely and supporting mental health and other wellness initiatives, the majority are not intending to make permanent adjustments to HR policies as a result of COVID-19.

At the time of the survey, the majority of firms (56%) believe their HR strategies or practices would not be permanently altered as a result of the pandemic (Figure 10).

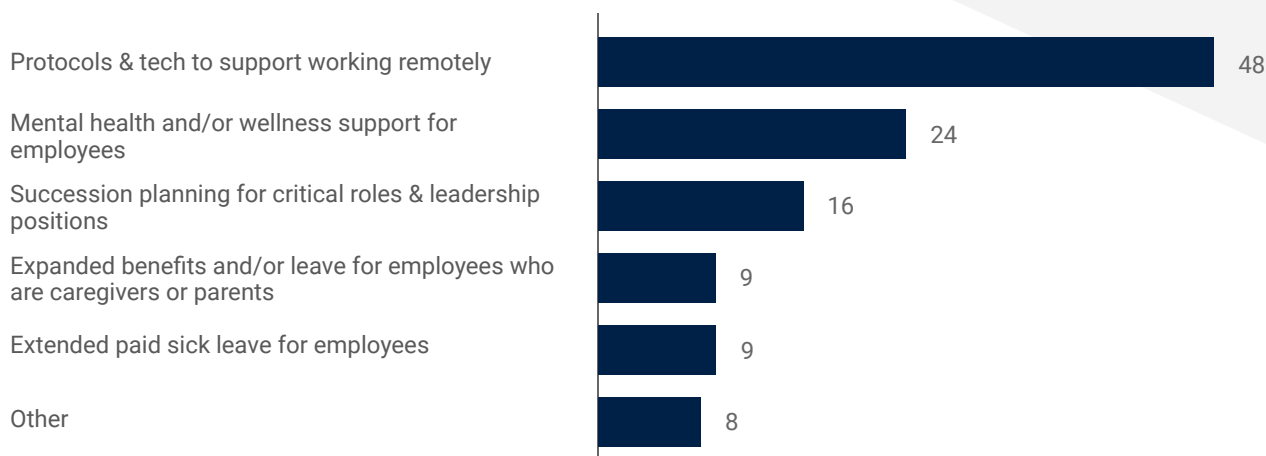
Figure 10. Impact of COVID-19 to decision-making and hiring strategies around Singapore-based workforce



Q: Has COVID-19 permanently impacted your company's decision-making or hiring strategies around their Singapore-based workforce?

Of those who did report re-strategizing of their firm's HR policies as a result of COVID-19, the most common measure was to support remote work, as well as to provide mental health and wellness support for their employees (Figure 11).

Figure 11. 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=57)

WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION

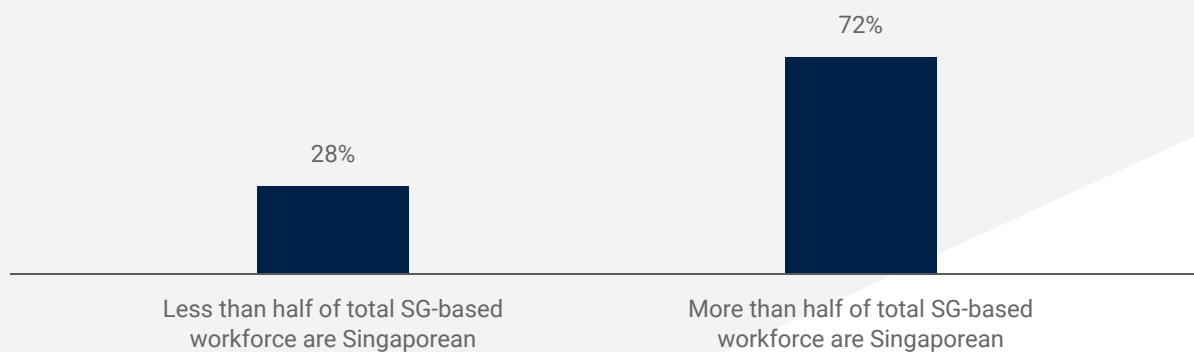
While the link between workforce diversity and corporate resilience has been documented, the business case for diversity has become more pressing.¹³ Fundamentally, companies with high diversity are more resilient, creative, and adaptive to change. Yet robust corporate diversity, particularly within leadership levels, has proven difficult. Even so, best practices for promoting diversity among the highest levels – whether the balance of foreign and local talent, gender, age, or other definitions of a diverse workforce – should be implemented at all levels of employment.

KEY FINDING 7

Companies are actively hiring women and local talent for their Singapore-based workforces, although less so for senior level positions.

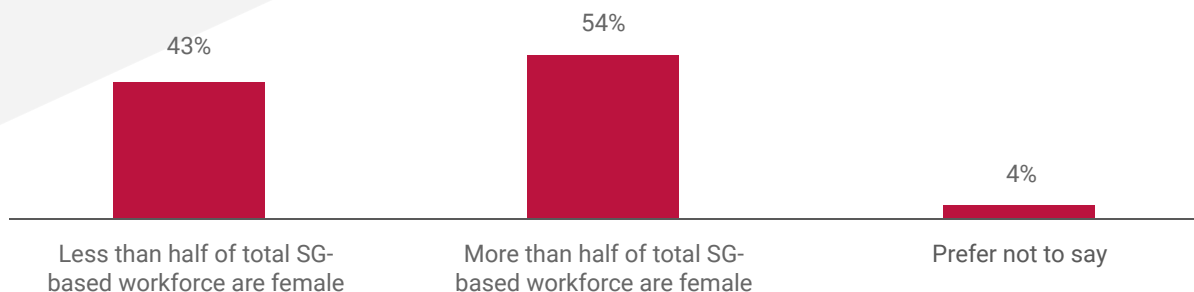
The majority of companies (72%) have predominately Singaporean workforces in Singapore (Figure 12). Similarly, just over half (54%), have Singapore-based workforces that are majority female (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising Singapore citizens and PRs



Q: What percentage of your total Singapore-based workforce comprises of Singapore citizens (incl. PRs)?

Figure 13. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women

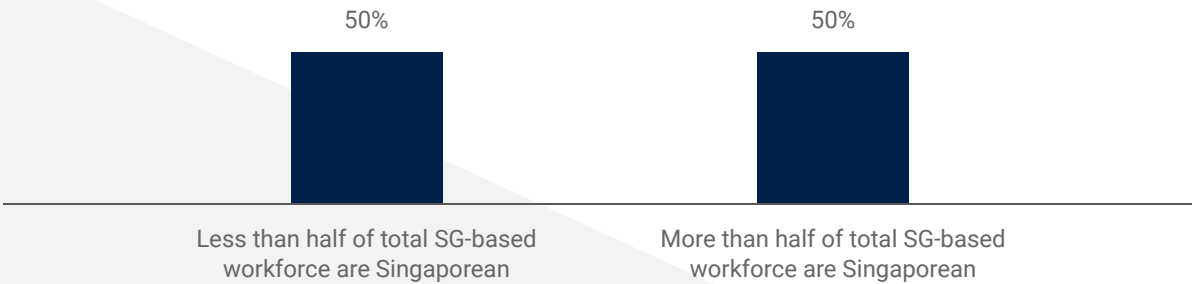


Q: What percentage of your total Singapore-based workforce comprises of women?

¹³Maria Levin, Forbes, "How To Translate Diversity Strategies Into Resilient Organizations" (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/worldeconomicforum/2020/03/06/how-to-translate-diversity-strategies-into-resilient-organizations/#12830e6c1c0e>)

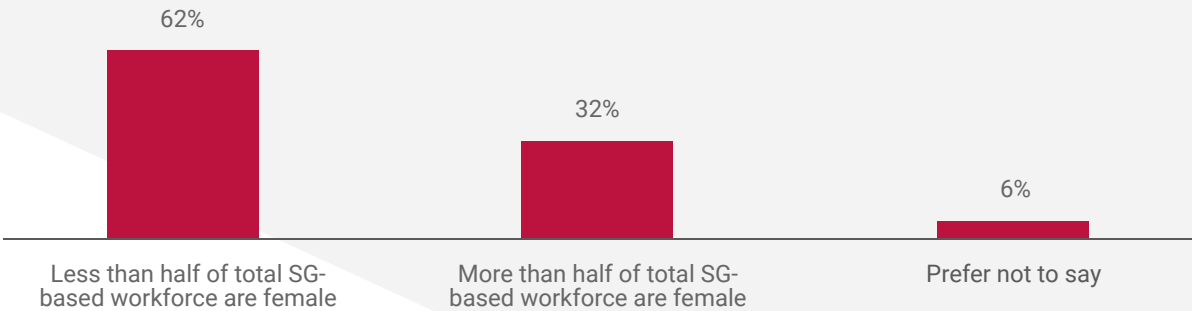
This diversity is less clear for senior level roles. While 50% report senior level workforces in Singapore that are Singaporean (Figure 14), only 3 in 10 surveyed firms say that senior roles within their companies are predominately filled by women (Figure 15).

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)?

Figure 15. Proportion of total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising women



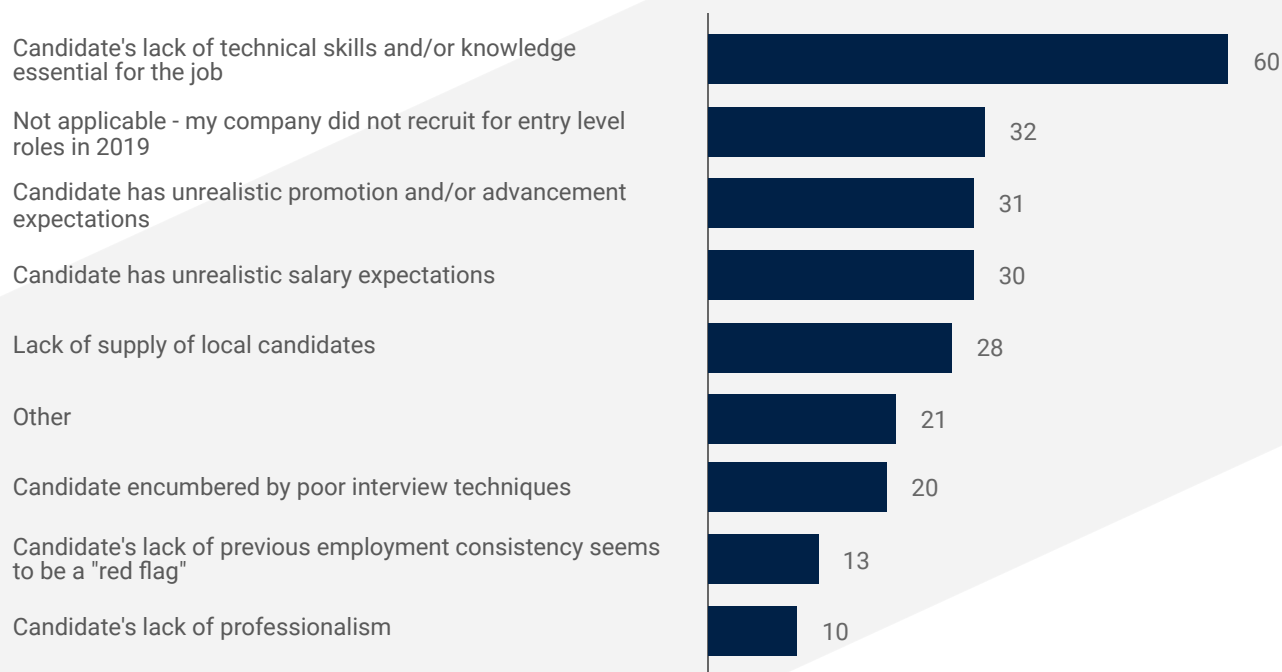
Q: What percentage of your total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprises of women?

KEY FINDING 8

Employers looking to hire entry-level Singaporeans are finding that candidates have unrealistic expectations, in addition to lacking relevant skills.

A recurring theme at many levels of employment and for many different types of firms, employers are finding that the biggest obstacle for Singaporean candidates for entry level roles is a lack of technical skills or knowledge for the job (Figure 14).

Figure 16. Biggest obstacles to recruiting entry-level Singaporeans and PRs with less than 5 years professional experience, which result in company hiring foreigners

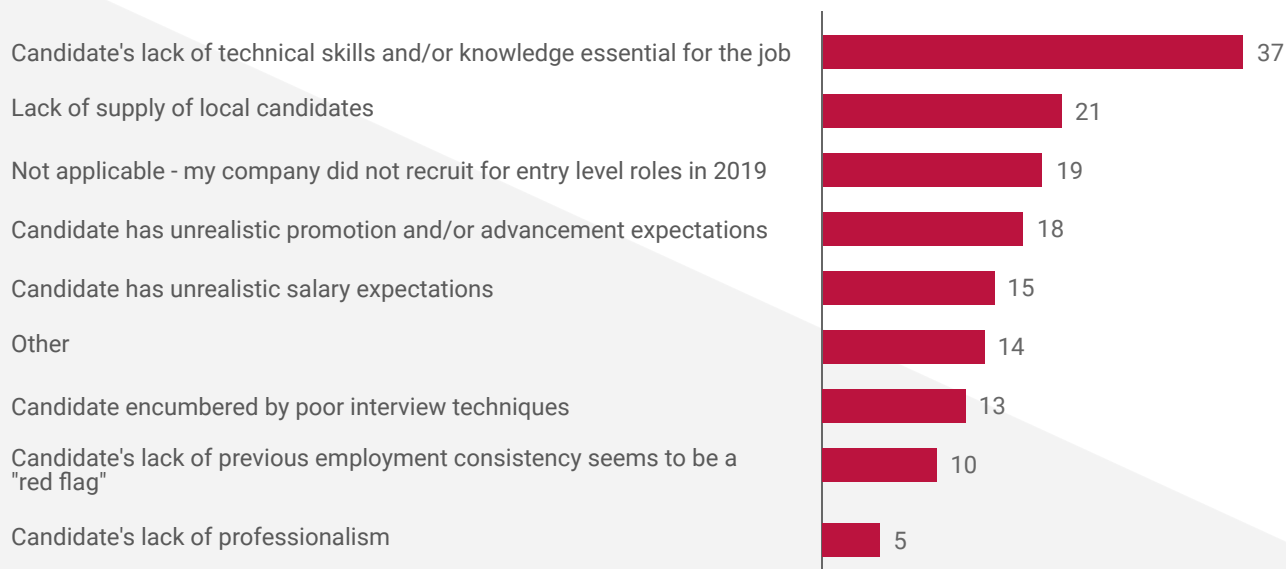


Q: What are the difficulties in recruiting entry level Singaporeans, incl. PRs, with less than 5 years of professional experience that result in your company hiring foreigners? (Select all that apply or N/A).

KEY FINDING 9

In addition to a common lack of necessary skills, MNCs and SMEs face different challenges when recruiting for entry level roles.

Figure 17. MNCs: Biggest obstacles to recruiting entry-level Singaporeans and PRs with less than 5 years professional experience, which result in company hiring foreigners



Q: MNC - What are the difficulties in recruiting entry level Singaporeans, incl. PRs, with less than 5 years of professional experience that result in your company hiring foreigners? (Select all that apply or N/A).

Figure 18. SMEs: Biggest obstacles to recruiting entry-level Singaporeans and PRs with less than 5 years professional experience, which result in company hiring foreigners



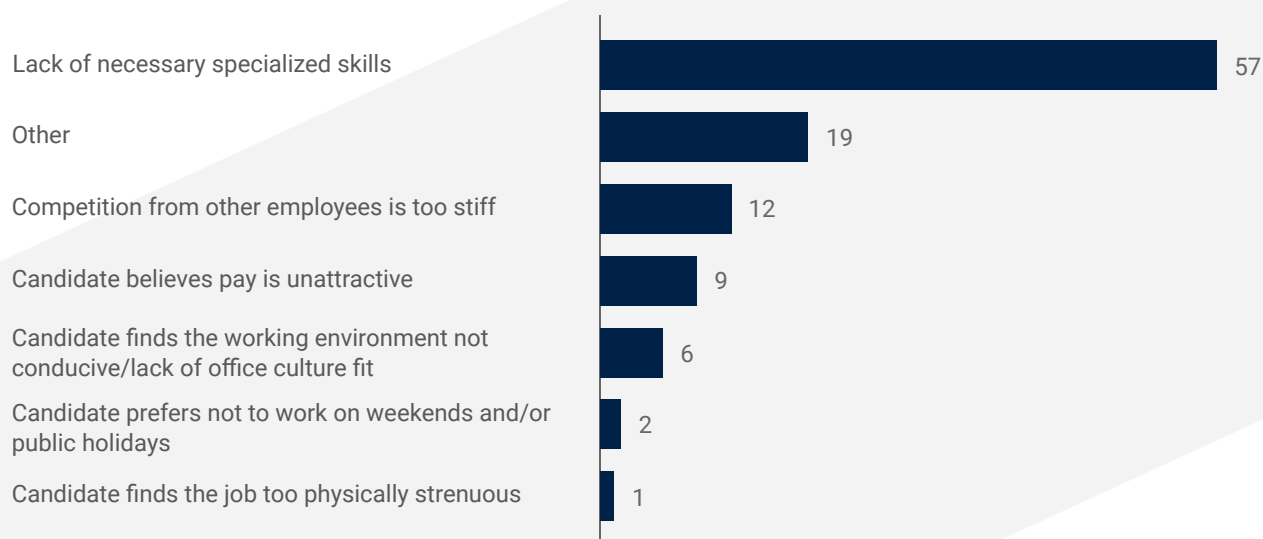
Q: SME - What are the difficulties in recruiting entry level Singaporeans, incl. PRs, with less than 5 years of professional experience that result in your company hiring foreigners? (Select all that apply or N/A).

KEY FINDING 10

For senior level roles, employers find it difficult to identify local candidates with the right skills and experience.

Of those firms with predominately foreign senior level workforces in Singapore, a lack of necessary specialized skills is the biggest obstacle in preventing them from hiring more actively from the local talent pool.

Figure 19. Biggest obstacles to hiring Singaporeans and PRs for senior level roles (answered by companies who reported predominately foreign senior level workforces in Singapore)



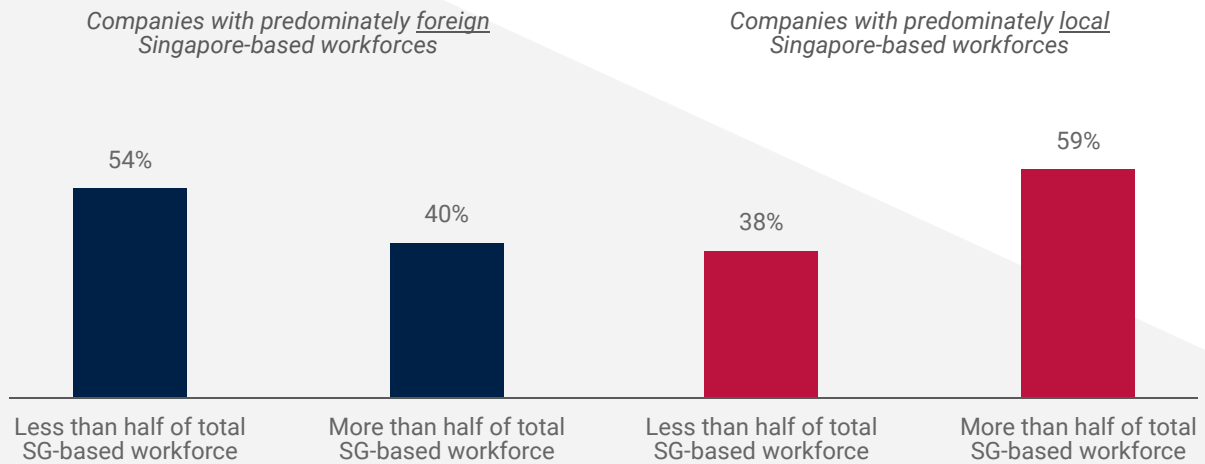
Q: What prevents your company from hiring Singaporeans (incl. PRs) in senior level (manager or above) roles within Singapore? (Select all that apply). (n=64)

KEY FINDING 11

Companies that have predominantly local workforces also predominantly hire women.

Of companies with predominantly foreign Singapore-based workforces (Figure 18), only 40% employ more women than men. Conversely, of the businesses who report predominantly local Singapore-based workforces, 59% employ more women than men.

Figure 20. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women



Q: What percentage of your total Singapore-based workforce comprises women?

KEY FINDING 12

A gap exists in Singaporeans working abroad in regional or leadership positions.

Half of surveyed firms for whom regional roles are based in Singapore report that less than half of their Singaporean workforce in Singapore work in such roles.

Figure 21. Proportion of total current Singaporean and PRs workforce, based in Singapore, working in regional role



Q: What percentage of your total current Singaporean (incl. PRs) workforce, based in Singapore, work in a regional role?

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE

YaleNUSCollege



Trisha Craig

Vice President for Engagement and Senior Lecturer in Global Affairs
Yale-NUS College

Smooth Transitions

One of the important roles of higher education is to prepare young people for employment. In an age of disruption and the changing nature of work, there is a great deal of debate about how universities can best do that. Surveys like the annual manpower inquiry conducted by AmCham provide incredibly useful feedback to those of us in the education sector and at the same time, highlight the need for universities and the business community to work together.

The kinds of problems the world faces in the years ahead require creativity, lateral thinking, a tolerance for ambiguity and an ability to move fluidly in different cultural settings.

At Yale-NUS College, we understand that getting students ready for work is not something that begins in the weeks leading up to graduation. Nor is our focus exclusively the first job, but rather a lifetime of roles and pursuits our alumni will undertake. Some of the ways we are working to ensure our graduates are ready for the challenges they will face include:

- Our multidisciplinary education encourages young people to view complex problems from different perspectives – scientific, social, ethical, economic, etc. - understanding that solutions need to be multi-valenced.
- Experiential learning brings students and faculty out of the classroom to test ideas in the world beyond campus.
- Partnerships with companies, organizations and institutions in Singapore and throughout the world provide internship opportunities.
- New pilot program for final year students in the Mathematical, Computational and Statistical Sciences major who will work with industry partners on the companies' projects while completing the year-long capstone project required of all students.
- Overseas experience - most students spend at least a few months overseas gaining international experience through study, work, or research.
- Multicultural environment – our fully residential model and tremendously diverse student body means students' perspectives are changed and broadened by peers.

Many of these not only ensure that students bring more usable skills to their first job and beyond but help align their expectations since students who have work experience have been shown to have more realistic view of work.

Businesses can also tap on universities and their career centers to get their perspectives on the current generation of job seekers. We know, for example, that today's graduates differ in some important ways from previous cohorts. One feature many managers point to, often with frustration, is the expectation of higher salaries and faster routes to promotion. But personal experience and many studies by firms like Gallup and McKinsey tell us that in addition to compensation, today's fresh grads have a somewhat different profile and expectations than many who came of age earlier:

- They care deeply about finding meaning and purpose in their work.
- They are hungry for mentoring and training.
- Work-life balance is important, especially when it comes to flexible work schedules.
- They are more comfortable with diversity and multi-cultural environments.

As businesses look to hire fresh grads, how can they take advantage of these broad characteristics?

- Make sure new recruits understand the core values and mission of the company and how their role relates to fulfilling those. A sense of how they are contributing to the bigger picture allows young employees to find meaning in their work. It is also important for managers to listen to young workers and get to know their values.
- While the rapid pace of promotion sought by entry-level employees may not be feasible for companies, high quality mentoring and training is. Taking an interest in developing the careers of new hires, assisting them to acquire skills and showing how those are related to career tracks in the firm help offer clarity and encouragement about promotion prospects.
- Keep an interest in their careers, even when you lose them. Pre-pandemic, surveys showed that not only was the youngest cohort of workers the most likely to plan to switch jobs in the next year but a high percentage of them (43%) felt that way. The reality is that in a decent economy, millennials may leave. But when the supply of local talent is tight, it pays to stay connected and remain encouraging to former employees who may return to a company and managers whom they see as committed to their advancement.
- With 85% of Singaporeans working from home during the circuit breaker, companies have found ways to function by adjusting working arrangements. Take advantage of what has been learned during this period to design and offer more flexible conditions. This will help not only to attract young talent but will resonate across the board as a recent survey tells us that 2/3 of Singaporean workers would like to maintain the ability to work at least partially from home in the post-pandemic world.
- Leverage their increased comfort with diversity. As companies work to be more inclusive, they can use the insights of the youngest cohorts as they consider new policies and programs. Allowing them to, for example, participate in Diversity & Inclusion committees or task forces also increases their sense of attachment to the organization.

There is ample room and much goodwill within the business community and local universities to work more closely together. Certainly, our interests are well-aligned as companies want to hire locally and universities desire good employment outcomes for their graduates.

Good relationships with university career offices can help with recruitment into existing company internship programs or developing new ones. Young alumni in firms are a bridge between the sectors as a trusted source of information for students about jobs and what it's like to work in a particular company or industry. Deploying young employees to talk to students at their alma maters helps set expectations for fresh grads and raises the recognition of the company. Finally, more channels for dialogue about the content of university courses and needs of local industry can help smooth the school to work transition for both graduates and employers.

RECRUITMENT

Employability is particularly important for employees entering the workforce this year who are likely to be severely impacted by disruptions in the labor market. The Singapore Government is facing this challenge with initiatives such as the SGUnited Traineeships Programme,¹⁴ which partners with local companies to host recent graduates for on-the-job training.

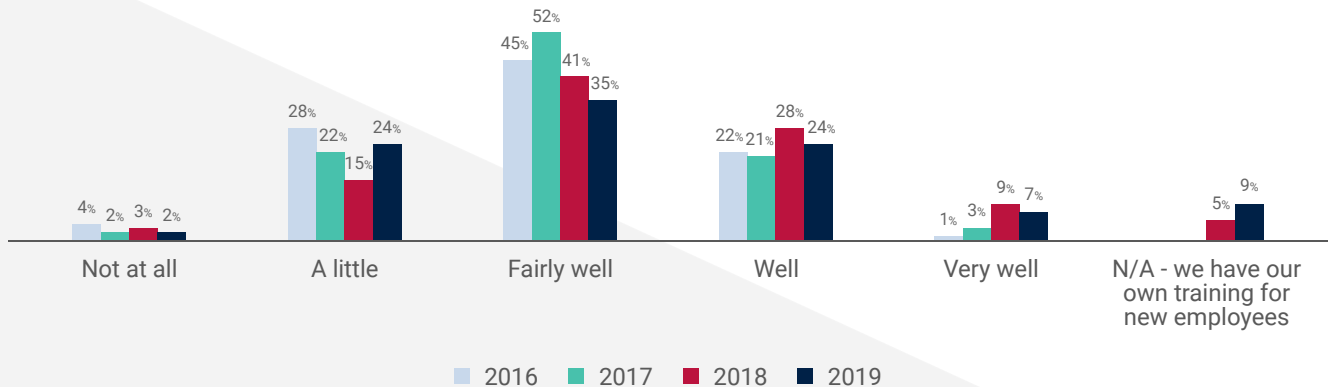
Despite such efforts, companies report that more needs to be done to prepare new graduates to succeed in the workplace. Regarding the preparedness of fresh graduates for the demands of the current workforce, the survey findings reveal that the optimism of companies has declined over time. Only 32% of respondents perceive that the institutions prepare their students “well” to “very well” for work, a 5% drop from the previous year.

¹⁴For more information, visit <https://www.wsg.gov.sg/SGUnitedTraineeships-Trainees.html>

KEY FINDING 13

Companies' optimism about the ability of local universities to prepare graduates for the workforce is softening.

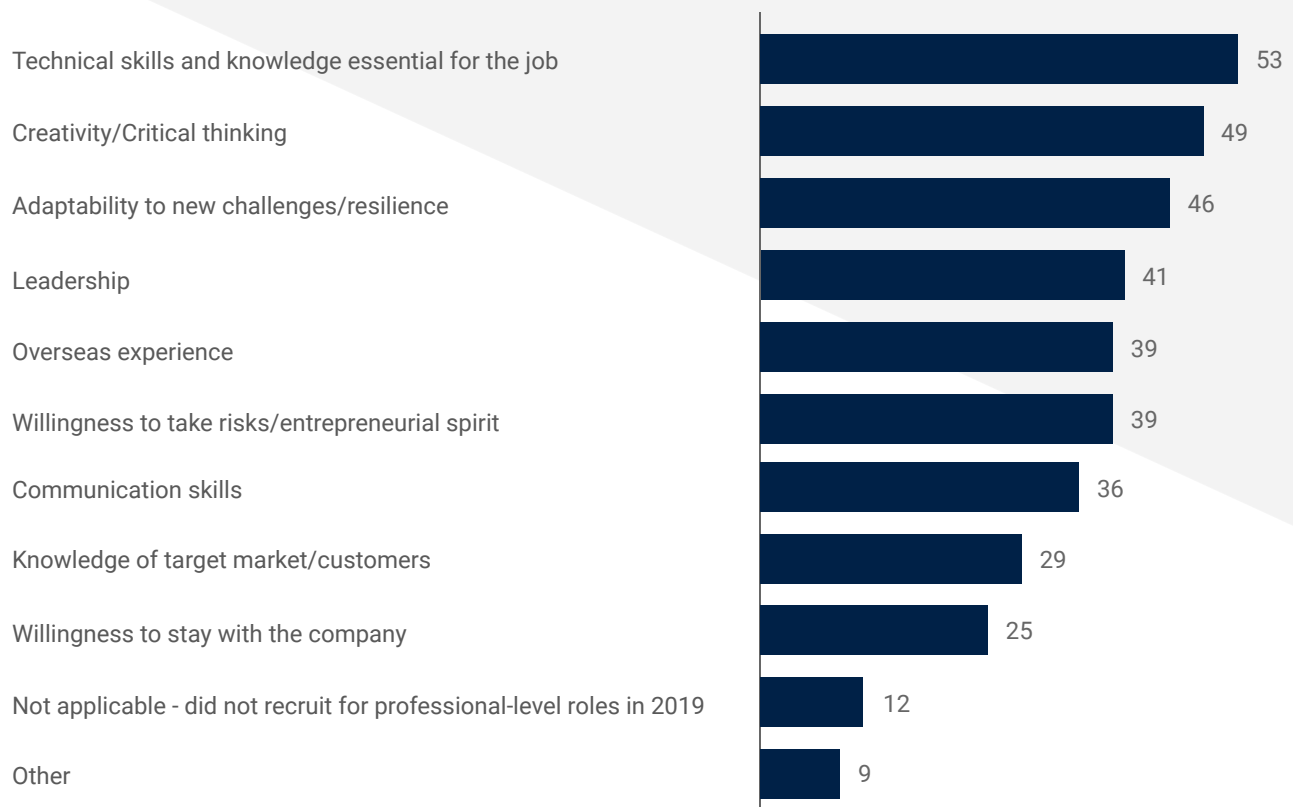
Figure 22. Extent to which Singaporean universities prepare fresh graduates (those graduated less than a year ago) for work



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.

Continuing a theme seen with both entry level roles (figures 14 and 15), a lack of technical skills essential for the job is the biggest obstacle employers face when recruiting from the local talent pool for mid-level roles.

Figure 23. Skillsets/attributes difficult to find among Singaporean professionals with more than 5 years of experience which result in hiring foreigners for those roles

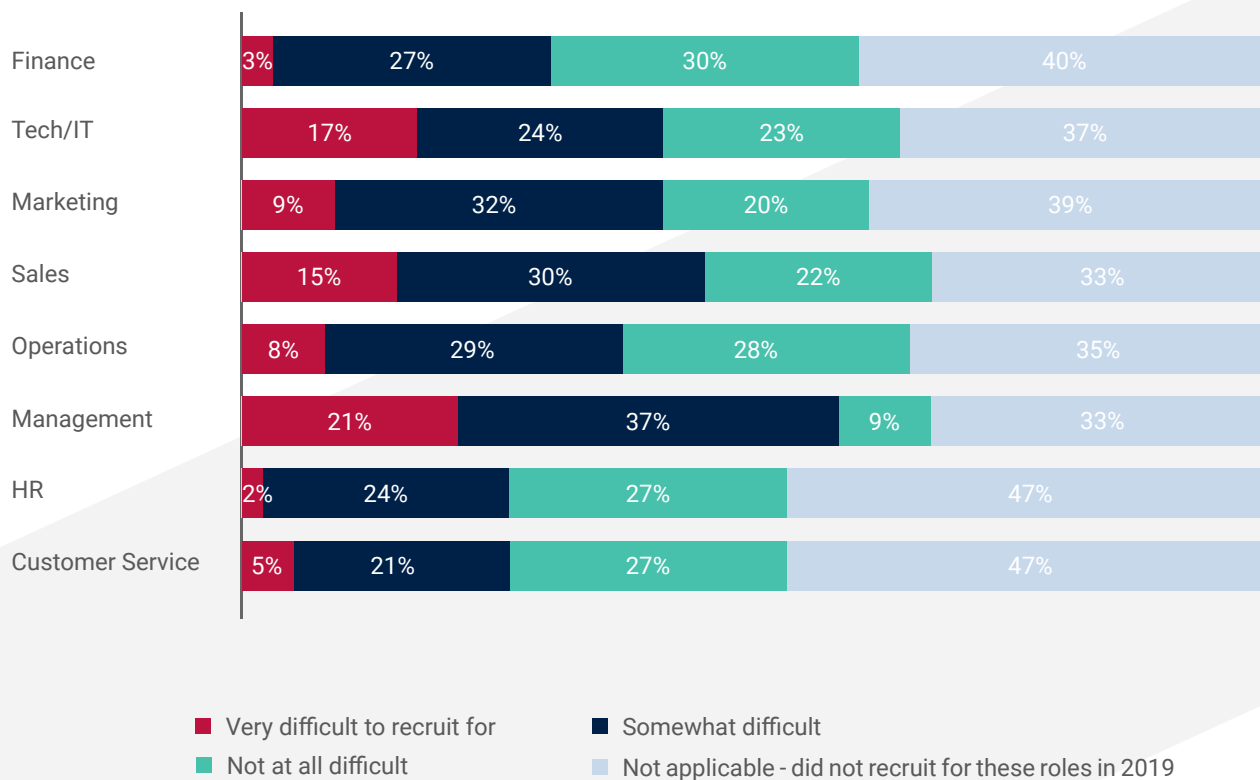


Q: What are the skillsets and/or attributes that are difficult to find among Singaporean professionals with more than 5 years of experience that specifically result in your company hiring foreigners for those roles? (Select all that apply or not applicable)

KEY FINDING 14

Management positions continue to be the most difficult to recruit locally.

Figure 24. 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 2019?

WORK PASS APPLICATIONS

Alongside workforce employability, the Singapore government has further strengthened its legal frameworks and regulations to promote the hiring of Singaporeans. At the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) Committee of Supply debate in March, Minister Josephine Teo outlined regulation changes under the Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) as part of the government being “watchful of discrimination against locals” and seeking to assure public sentiments about a “level playing field”.¹⁵

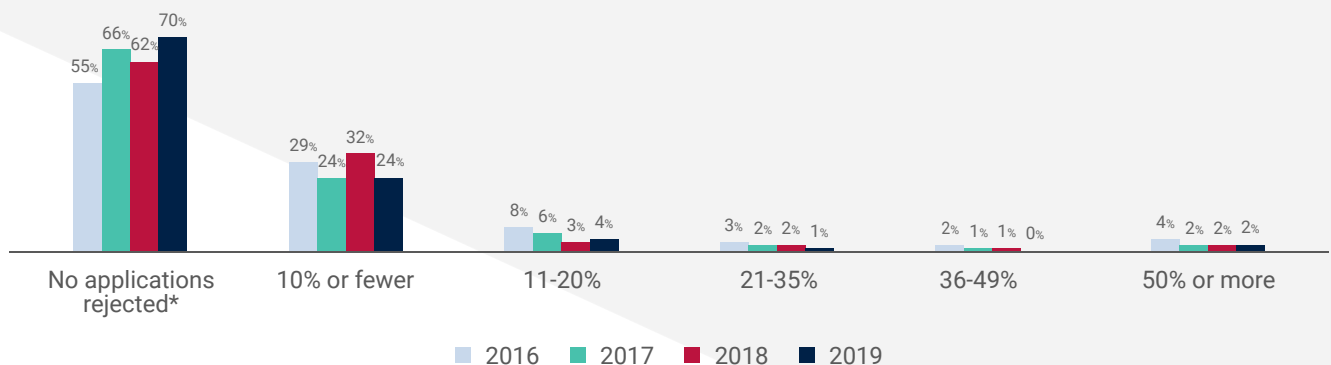
The survey finds that growing awareness of available resources and requirements such as the FCF are driving down work pass rejection rates over time. At the same time, awareness and utilization of government programs to support hiring and retention remain low.

KEY FINDING 15

Growing awareness of available resources and applications requirements is driving down work pass application rejection rates.

Significant utilization of MOM resources prior to applying (Figure 26) and growing awareness of the Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) requirements can be linked to work pass application approval rates going up steadily since 2016 (Figure 23).

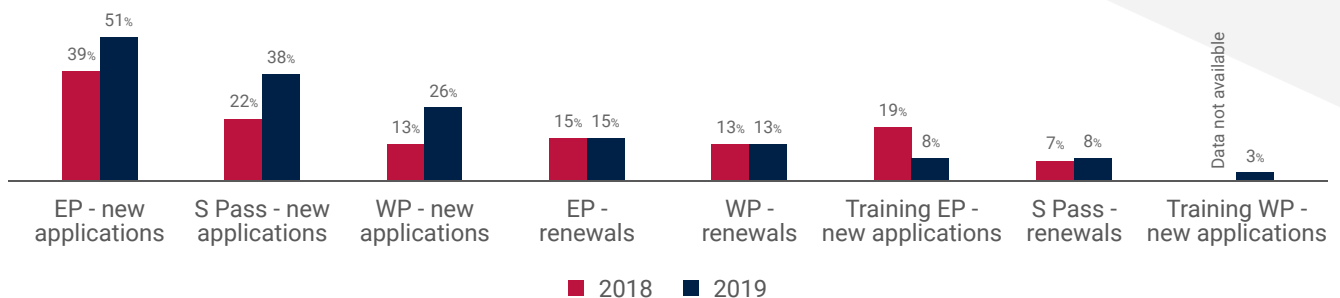
Figure 25. Percentage of submitted work pass applications rejected



Q: What percentage of your submitted work pass applications have been rejected?

*For 2018 and 2019, percentages in this category include companies who did not submit work pass applications that year AND had not applications

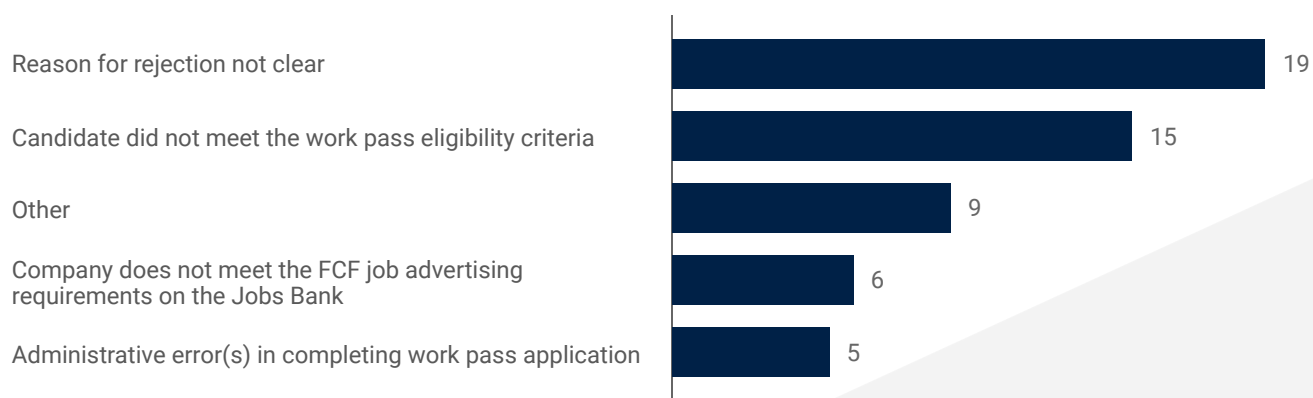
Figure 26. Classifications of work pass applications rejected



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

¹⁵Ministry of Manpower, “Speech by Minister for Manpower, Ms Josephine Teo at MOM Committee of Supply 2020” (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/speeches/2020/speech-by-minister-for-manpower-mrs-josephine-teo-at-mom-committee-of-supply-2020>)

Figure 27. Reasons given for work pass rejections



Q: What was the reason given for the rejection of applied work passes? (Select all that apply). (n=39)

Figure 28. Use of MOM resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying

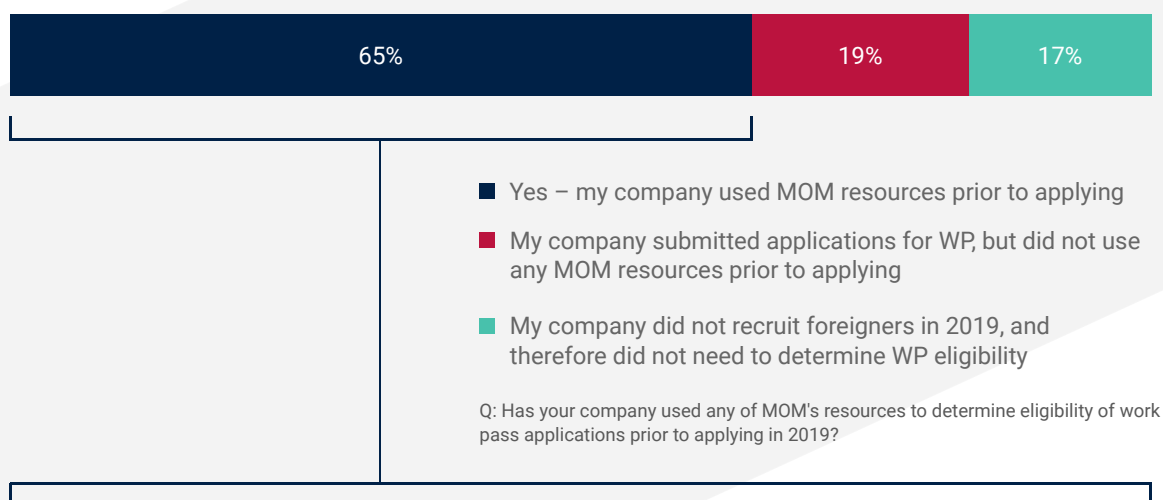
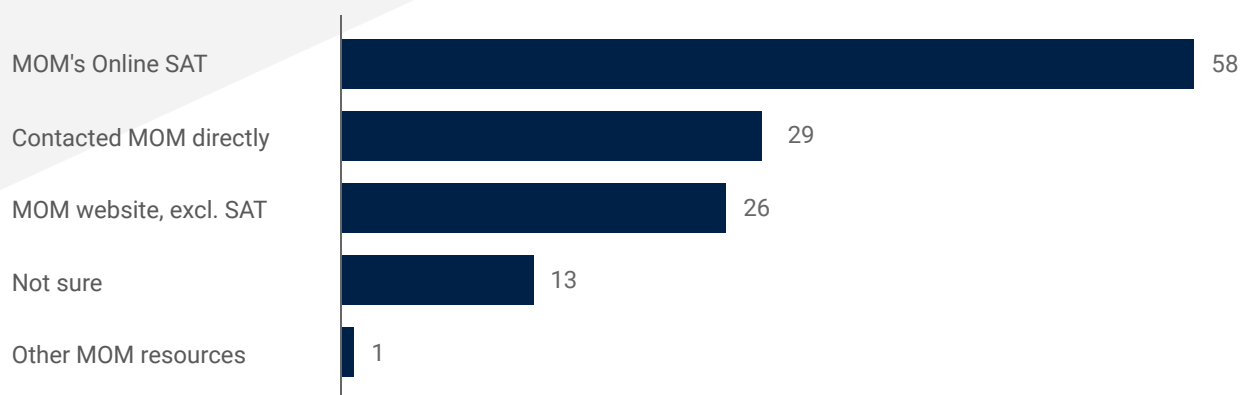
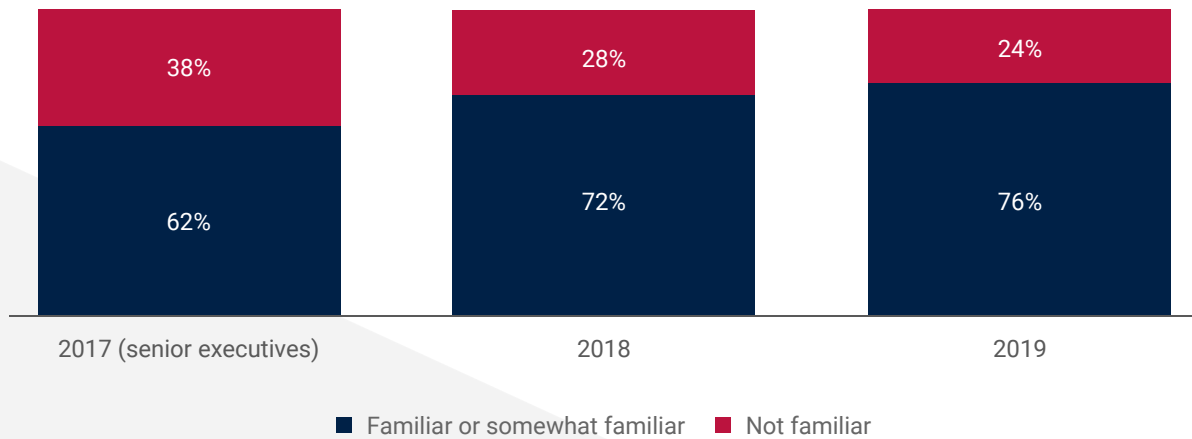


Figure 29. MOM resources used in 2019



Q: Which MOM resources did your company use in 2019? (Select all that apply). (n=82)

Figure 30. Familiarity with the Fair Consideration Framework

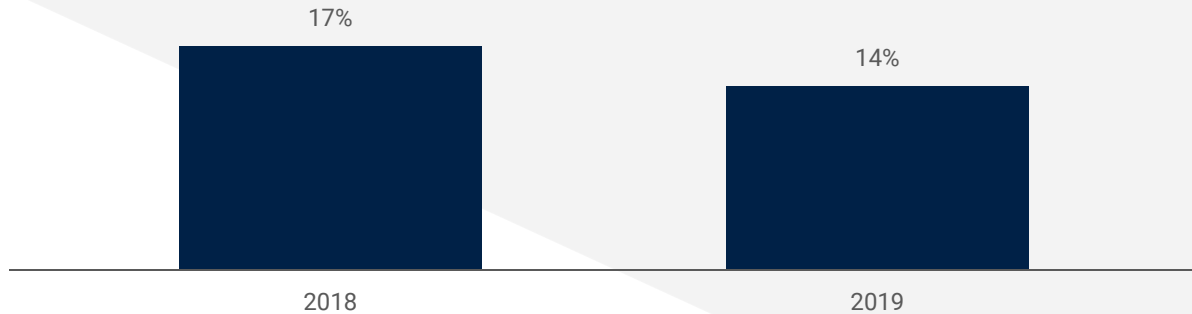


Q: Are you familiar with the Fair Consideration Framework?

KEY FINDING 16

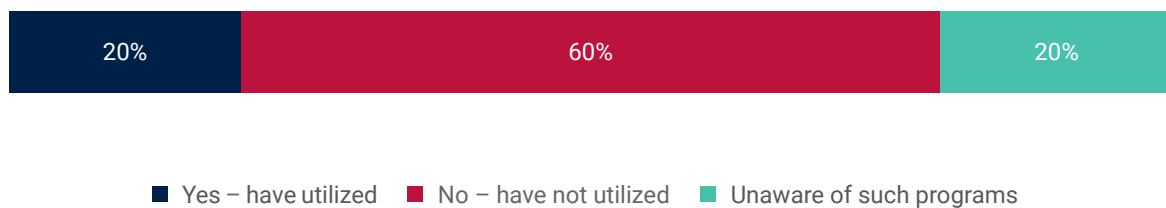
When it comes to support for hiring and retention, government programs remain under-utilized.

Figure 31. Utilization of government programs for conversion from other industries



Q: Has your company utilized any government programs to convert employees from other industries, e.g. Professional Conversion Programmes?

Figure 32. Utilization of government programs to support hiring or retention of older workers



Q: Has your company utilized any government programs to support hiring or retention of older workers?

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE



Elisa Mallis

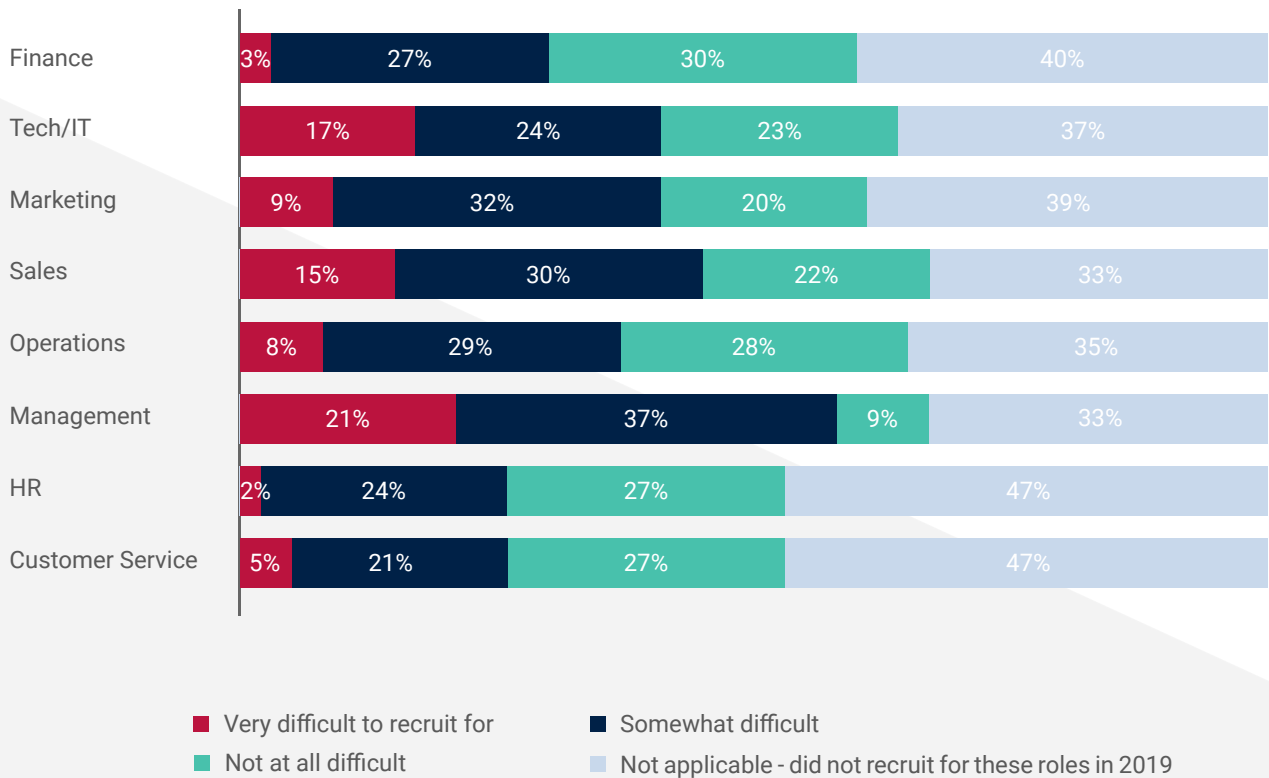
APAC, Managing Director & Vice President
Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

Despite the current setback due to the global pandemic, Asian countries will continue to outperform global economies in the next decade. Data suggests that countries across Southeast and South Asia are outpacing the growth rates of most developed countries in Europe and the Americas. However, to consistently outperform the rest of the world, Asia must seize opportunities and overcome challenges arising from imminent megatrends playing out globally, now accelerated by the COVID pandemic. Undoubtedly, these megatrends will impact Asian societies, businesses, as well as individuals. Yet, in volatility also lie many opportunities for Asia, including Singapore, to scale in terms of overall development and prosperity.

From recent interviews conducted with C-Suite leaders across the region, we've heard that in the COVID and post-COVID era, leadership will be the key differentiator between organizations that come out of COVID stronger and those that struggle and in some cases perish.¹ Yet, from this year's AmCham Manpower Survey results, we also see that an ongoing challenge for the multinational companies participating in the survey is identifying local candidates with the right skills and experience for leadership positions.

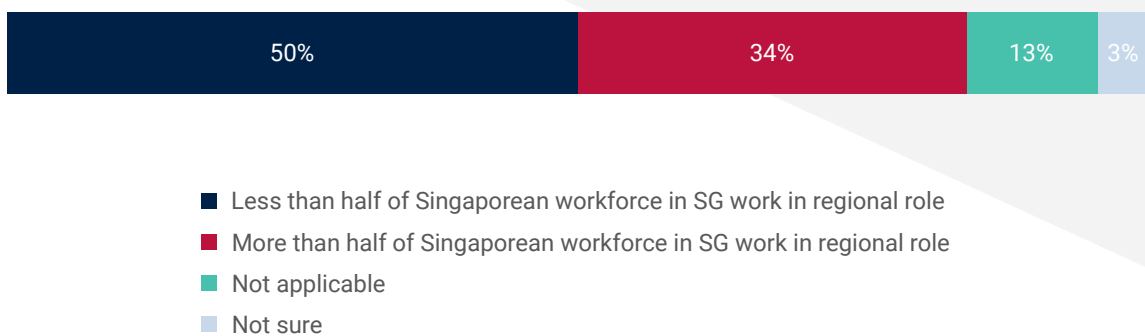
¹For more information, visit: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/white-papers/world-versus-covid/>

Business sectors finding it most difficult to recruit Singaporeans



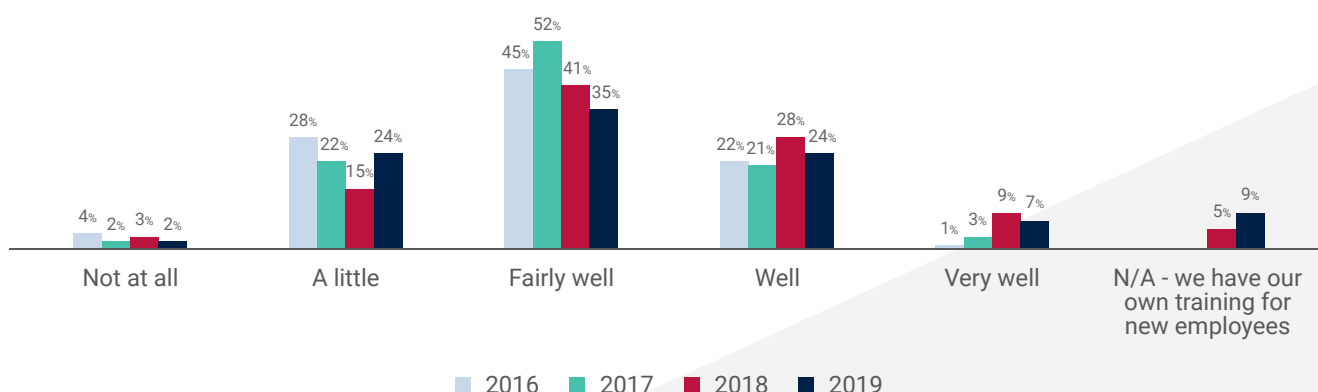
Q: Of the business sectors here, which, if any, has your company had difficulty in recruiting Singaporeans for in 2019?

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



Q: What percentage of your total current Singaporean (incl. PRs) workforce, based in Singapore, work in a regional role?

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.

Skillsets/attributes difficult to find among Singaporean professionals with more than 5 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 5 years of experience that specifically result in your company hiring foreigners for those roles? (Select all that apply or not applicable)

Considering the challenges facing leadership globally, Singapore has a number of advantages:

- Singapore has been consistently demonstrating technological progress in transforming industries faster than many other countries in the region and globally, including: jet turbines, fintech services, flourishing technology and start-up scenes, and new medical research. Local entrepreneurs and companies also show promise to strengthen, scale up and expand into the international market.
- Being a small country which has been prudent in its spending of past budget surpluses has allowed the country to build up a strategic asset – its reserves. We have seen in recent months how it has been used to cushion the effects of COVID-19. Singapore has the agility and resources to quickly adapt to the changing circumstances faster than many larger and capital constrained countries.
- Well-versed in cultural diversity, Singaporeans are well-equipped to overcome and even leverage national differences when looking for new approaches to solve complex, global problems. Singaporeans have the global mindset to recognize and adopt the healthy principles of free and open global trade.

In the [Imagining 2030: Future Fluent Asian Leader research](#) by the Center for Creative Leadership, we see that no matter what leaders have done in the last 20-30 years, the amount of upcoming exponential change will require new ways of leading, not only in Singapore but across Asia and the world. Future-fluent Singaporean leaders will therefore need capabilities to “act differently”, “think and learn differently” and “feel differently”. In such a fast changing environment, the future Singaporean leader will not only need to be ready to deal with disruption and technology, but also need to be grounded enough to embrace realities and constraints.

“Even as we help businesses prepare for Industry 4.0, how do we prepare our employees and colleagues to become Worker 4.0 at the future workplace?” questions a senior leader in the Singapore Labour Movement, The Singapore National Trades Union Congress (NTUC).

He explains: “Worker 4.0 is one whom I envisage to be adept at navigating change, asking the right questions and finding new solutions to complex problems. Worker 4.0 is proficient in working with machines, using technology and tapping digital resources to be more productive at work as well. To do so, Worker 4.0 requires a combination of skill sets—adaptive, technology and technical skills.”

Act Differently

With information more readily available to all, leaders need to be open and transparent about what they can or cannot do, should or should-not do. Huge uncertainties in the future mean leaders should not claim to have all the answers. What can help to capture the hearts and minds will be the intellectual honesty and courage to say and do the “right things”, with a clear purpose and the personal accountability to get there, even while admitting to not having figured out the solutions.

This is a big shift from our past leadership style of being all knowing, into one that will require more agility and risk taking to keep up with the pace of change.

Think and Learn Differently

The cognitive strength to be both Strategic and Innovative are coming up as a couple of the critical leadership skills moving forward.

These two leadership capabilities have always been important predictors of success at senior levels. The difference today is that they are becoming important much earlier on in the career of young leaders. Leaders must possess ability to anticipate the future, work backwards and response to unprecedented problems with new solutions quickly.

Feel Differently

More than ever, the cognitive strength required to anticipate multiple future scenarios and come up with new solutions to unprecedented problems, needs to be equally balanced with the empathy to be in touch with humanity.

As deep inequality, poverty and sustainability issues form the root cause of some of the global challenges we will be facing, leaders across the world must feel differently around their accountability toward both their community and global society. Future leaders will need a higher level of commitment and personal accountability for not only their actions, but also their impact on the society around them.

Must-Have COVID Combat Capabilities

As the world inches toward recovery, leaders must be equipped with these critical capabilities:

EMPATHY



Ability to understand and share the feelings of stakeholders

TRUST



Believe in the ability and intent of key stakeholders

AGILITY



Ability to think, understand and move quickly

GROWTH MINDSET



Resilient thinking and attitude through constant learning

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL THINKING



Ability to see the same problem from different dimensions

- **Empathy** to deal with the health crises, allay fears of employees, develop critical bonds with customers, and show solidarity with vendors.
- **Trust** in and by stakeholders. They must demonstrate trust in employees to give their 100 percent with their new flexibility, and trust in vendors to clear outstanding payments. Leaders must also be seen as trustworthy by suppliers and key clients.
- **Agility** to deal with multiple moving pieces in the national and global context that are impacting the organization. As the world starts to make a 'U' or 'W' or 'L' shaped recovery in a few months, leaders must pivot their organizations' response around new markets, new competitors, new ways of doing business, and new work designs.
- **Growth mindset** to continuously look within, rediscover, unlearn and relearn skills. "Leaders must reprogram their mindset so that the automatic stress response does not overwhelm them and their teams," shares the chair of a global consulting firm.
- **Multi-dimensional thinking** to think and act on multiple planes - to quickly scan potential opportunities, risks, stakeholder expectations, and deal with new world situations. "We must create leaders who can thrive in a super dynamic environment," advises a regional business head.

While many organizations are still fire-fighting to arrest the downward spiral, agile leaders are already plotting their come-back. The win over COVID will depend on enlightened leaders at all levels, across thousands of organizations and hundreds of nations, to define and shape the victory.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Sourced from AmCham's membership, 127 senior executives completed the 2020 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 April 20 – May 10, 2020.

Company Size¹³

MNCs: 66%

SMEs: 34%

Primary Sector

Services: 75%

Manufacturing: 25%

HR Profile of Respondent Companies:

How many employees are on your HR team?

None	12%
1-5 employees	36%
5-10 employees	16%
10-20 employees	10%
More than 20 employees	26%

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

Talent attraction and management	69%
Performance and rewards	63%
Learning and development	59%
Payroll	56%
Strategy	43%
Organization design	40%
HR technology	27%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	25%

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

Singapore only	24%
Southeast Asia (including Singapore)	18%
Asia-Pacific (including Singapore)	28%
Global	7%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	23%

¹³ 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.

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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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