



AmCham
SINGAPORE

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2021 MANPOWER SURVEY RESULTS

**Working Together:
Productively Engaged, Future Smart and Global Ready**

"We were totally happy with the process. We had actually expected this to be a very difficult search due to the specific requirements and geographies involved. As things turned out, it was an exceptionally quick process. Their advice and counsel was superb."

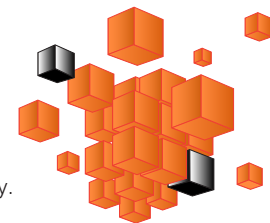
*Steve Hasson
Head of Global Recruitment, Group HR,
UK, PZ Cussons*

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INTRODUCTION

The past 18 months have been a very bumpy ride for Singapore and the rest of the world as COVID-19 has disrupted nearly all aspects of life and work. Despite the economic setbacks, Singapore has weathered the turbulence better than most other countries in the Asia Pacific region; including achieving a COVID-19 vaccination rate of over 80% and one of the lowest coronavirus fatality rates globally.

Singapore has also maintained its reputation as an international business, technology and talent hub. With a population of 5.45 million people, Singapore recognizes the need to look beyond its borders to leverage and benefit from international and global talent and expertise. As of June 2021, Singapore's foreign workforce comprises nearly 1.20 million people, down from 1.43 million in 2019.¹ This is in addition to the approximate 2.3 million (2020 data) resident labor force.² Along with turbulence to the economy, the last year has brought significant disruptions to the workforce and workplaces in Singapore.

Between June and August 2021, 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 balance of foreigners in the local workforce, the prioritization of inclusivity in the workplace, and the impact of COVID-19 on business operations and HR practices are a few of the key issues explored.

The AmCham member survey data suggests positive trends in shaping an inclusive workforce in Singapore as organizations continue to focus on closing diversity and gender pay gaps. Due to COVID-19, workplace health has become a higher priority for organizations, as they continue to enable employees to work remotely, and support mental health and other wellness initiatives. The data also suggests a slight increase in Singaporeans working in regional leadership positions. Overall, hiring and retention programs for local workers continue to increase.

Looking ahead, four key priorities for future success emerged from the data and interviews of senior business and HR leaders:

- an increasing number of future-ready talent graduating from local universities and institutes of higher learning;
- a consistent agenda on engaging the workforce in the wake of ongoing disruptions;
- a stronger pipeline of global-ready Singaporean leaders; and
- an environment to attract and retain the right foreign talent.

The report highlights some of the latest examples and approaches that member companies are using to focus on these four key priorities.

The over 5,000 American companies operating in Singapore³ continue to be invested and committed to Singapore's long-term success. Public-private partnerships to support ongoing progress on manpower policies, initiatives, and practices that can build the capabilities and skills of the local workforce, while leveraging the unique strengths of foreign talent are key to boosting Singapore's leadership role in the region and the world.

¹ <https://www.mom.gov.sg/documents-and-publications/foreign-workforce-numbers>

² <https://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Labour-Force-Summary-Table.aspx>

³ [U.S. Relations With Singapore - United States Department of State](#)

INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

An inclusive organization need to be even more deliberate in creating an inclusive environment during crisis periods, such as the pandemic the world has been witnessing over the past 18 months, particularly because some segments of the workforce (especially women and older workers) have been more negatively impacted.

KEY FINDING 1

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

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

Figure 1. Familiarity with SG Enable

Q: Are you familiar with SG Enable? (n=52)

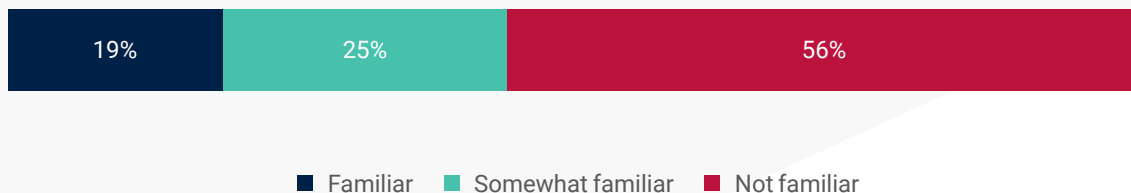
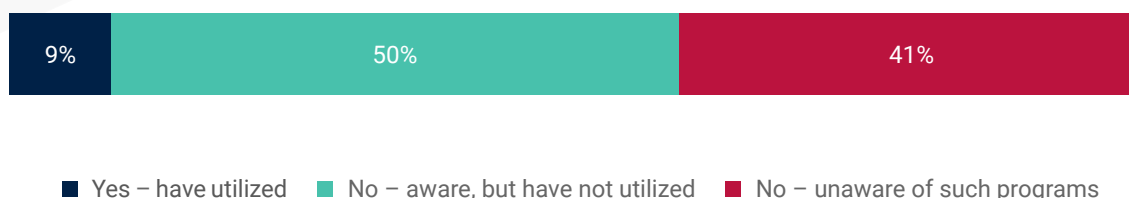


Figure 2. Utilization of any government programs or funding to support employment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

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=54)



KEY FINDING 2

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

Similar to last year, nearly three in four respondents do not perceive any gender pay gaps in their organization. The majority of respondents do not perceive any challenges in hiring and retaining workers in the age group of 55 years and above.

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? (n=53)

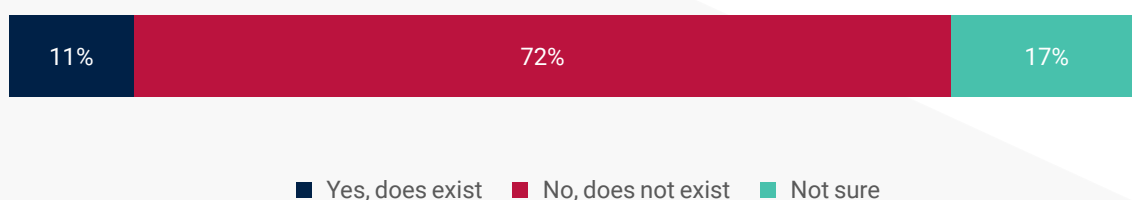
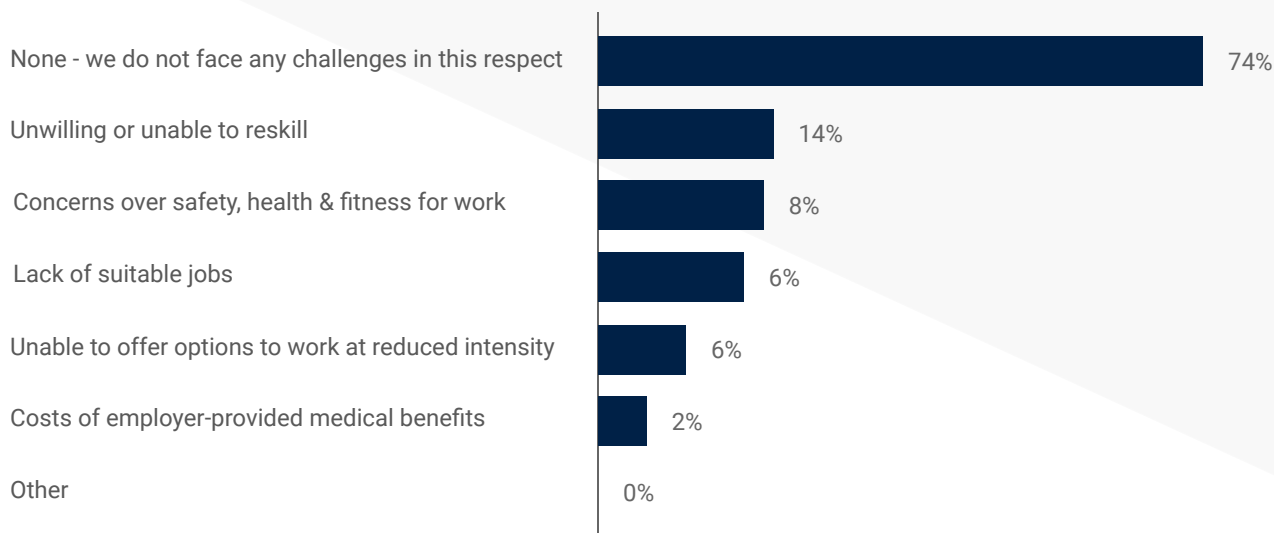


Figure 4. Challenges faced with hiring & retaining Singapore (SG) citizens & Permanent Residents (PRs) aged 55 and above

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).



KEY FINDING 3

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

Organizations report institutionalization of inclusive practices. More organizations report incorporating non-discrimination policies into the company talent practices as compared to the previous year. However, only two in five companies formally support or fund employee resource groups (ERGs), there was a marginal improvement over the previous year.

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

Q: Does your company have any non-discrimination policies formally incorporated into their hiring or retention practices? (n=53)

**Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*



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

Figure 6. Support or funding for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Q: Does your company formally support or fund any ERGs for their employees? (n=54)

**Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*



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

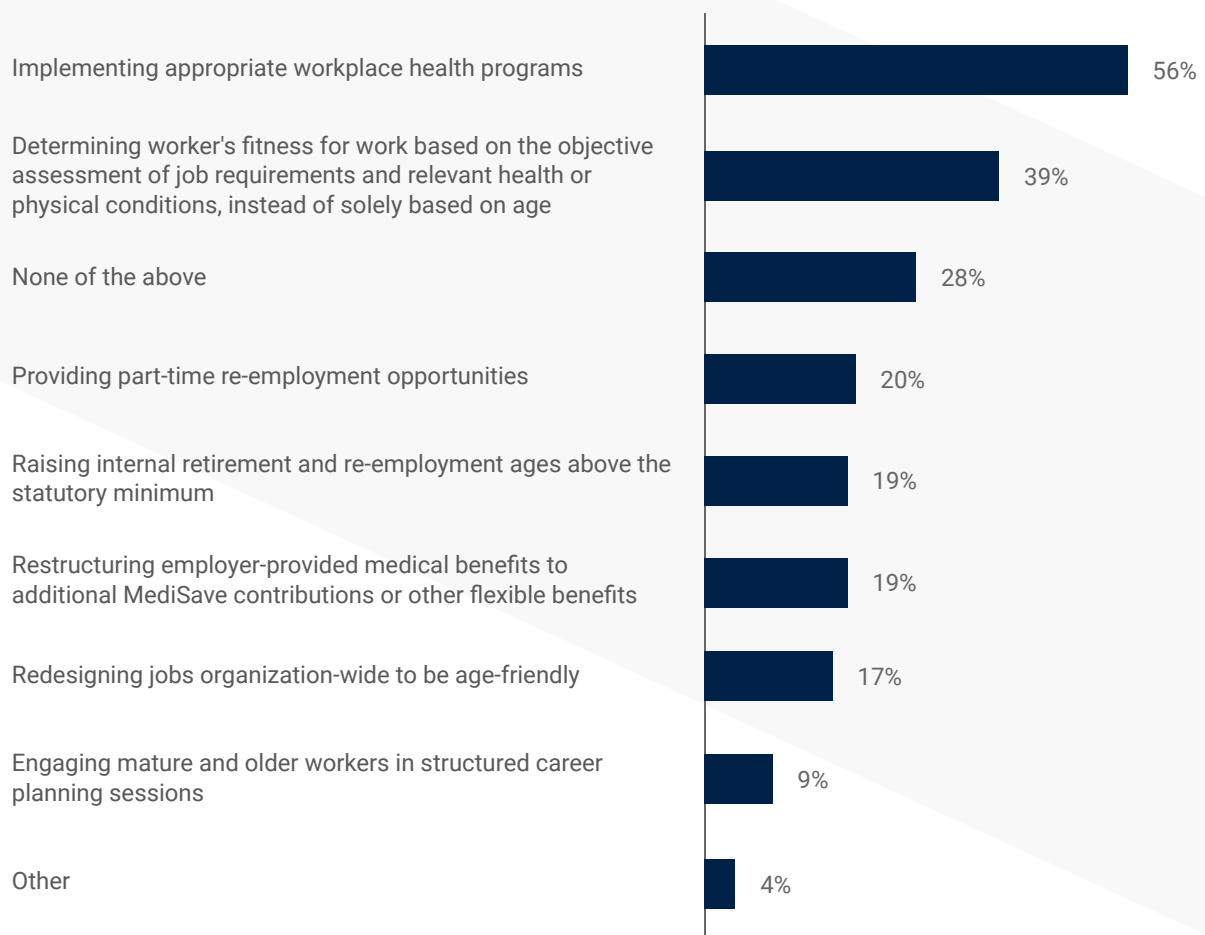
KEY FINDING 4

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

Over 70% of respondents report that their companies have official measures in place to foster an inclusive and progressive workplace. Levers organizations commonly use include health programs, worker fitness assessment initiatives, and offering part-time re-employment. More respondents reported implementation of workplace health programs as compared to the previous year.

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). (n=54)



SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE

Singaporean Leaders Going Global



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

As Singapore continues to develop and strengthen its capabilities as a regional talent, technology and business hub, there is an ongoing and increased need for contributions from local and foreign leaders with an international mindset, skillset and work experience. For multi-nationals with regional hubs in Singapore as well as Singaporean companies that are going global, leaders who are able to effectively conduct business across multiple countries in Asia as well as across regions are essential for success. Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, business and HR leaders in Singapore are increasingly looking for new approaches to develop and shape a workforce, with the support of qualified foreign talent, that caters to the new global business landscape. The push from global headquarters to diversify leadership at both the regional and global level, is further fueling the need for more global-ready leaders.

According to the 2021 AmCham Manpower Survey results, management positions continue to be the most difficult to recruit for locally, compared to other roles across business functions and sectors such as Sales, Tech/IT, and marketing. The lack of necessary specialized skills and work experience continue to be the top two reasons that prevent companies from hiring Singaporeans, including PRs, in senior level (manager or above) roles in Singapore. One positive trend we see compared to last year is in the percentage of Singaporean and PR workforce based in Singapore that work in regional roles – over 40% of respondents say that more than half of their Singaporean workforce in Singapore work in regional roles, an increase from last year.

In addition to the survey, we conducted a number of interviews with senior business and HR leaders at AmCham member companies between July and

September 2021. The interviews focused on the latest barriers that Singaporean leaders face in their journey to regional or global roles, the critical skills they must have, how to overcome common challenges, and the latest practices that organizations successfully deploy to develop a more robust pipeline of global-ready Singaporean leaders.

What is stalling the growth of leaders into regional roles?

Two major roadblocks hinder leaders from advancing into regional roles: 1) 'Access' challenges, which include local context or organizational biases hindering the ability of local leaders to access regional positions; and 2) 'Success' challenges, which include capability, aspiration, and cultural factors that make the journey to the regional and global roles more challenging for Singaporean leaders.

The successful global leader prototype for multi-nationals, whether they are Western or Asian, often emulates preferred leadership traits in the country or region where headquarters are based. Especially when there is a lack of diversity in executive teams and boards, biases against non-native leaders may become more prominent. This may unintentionally create roadblocks in the path of Asian leaders stepping into global roles in multi-national companies.

In the last decade, however, Western multi-nationals with a sizeable regional and global talent pool of Asian leaders have reframed their definition of global leaders and are working at multiple levels to increase diversity in leadership styles and increase global developmental opportunities.

For instance, Johnson & Johnson, which set up its regional headquarters in Singapore in 1975, has several programs that provide opportunities to their local leaders to enable them to step into critical regional and global roles.⁴

Singaporean leaders, however, may have a risk-averse approach that deters them from taking chances on their careers including an unwillingness to move outside of their home country. At times, Singaporean leaders also find it challenging to adjust to an 'MNC culture' as there may be cultural nuances that put an Asian leader at a disadvantage.

Leaders highlighted that Singapore has a safe and protected environment with robust processes and systems. Additionally, there is often a 'back-up' plan when the unexpected occurs. The 'fail-safe' approach and predictability which make Singaporean managers among the best in the world, also puts them at a disadvantage when dealing with the ambiguity and unknowns that come with regional and global roles.

Success in global roles is often dependent on multi-cultural, multi-environment experience. Such experience, more often than not, requires leaders to take on global rotations and postings that push leaders out of their comfort zone and accelerate the development of their global mindset. Those interviewed highlighted that Singaporean leaders continue to be unwilling to relocate to other countries, especially developing countries because of limited career opportunities for spouses, challenges in helping children exit and return to the highly competitive local Singapore education system, and a lack of suitable repatriation opportunities.

Are there must-have global leadership skills?

The Center for Creative Leadership's (CCL) *Global Asian Leader* research highlights five must-have skills for regional and global roles. Singaporean leaders must be deliberate in finding opportunities and experiences to further develop the following skills in order to succeed in regional and global roles.

- **Courage** to communicate thoughts directly, take on non-obvious roles, lean-in to embrace crucible assignments, or to simply 'show-up.'
- **Curiosity** to learn about different cultures, pick-up new skills, try different cuisines, know about different functions in the organization.
- Authenticity, which helps build **trust** with managers, direct-reports, and peers within and outside the function, department or country.
- Ability to **influence** decisions to accomplish tasks in a heavily matrixed multi-national company structure.
- And, **strategic thinking**, which is the ability to appreciate complex environment while taking decisions, understanding perspectives of different functional areas, thinking long term, and wearing a 'CEO-hat.'

How can Singaporean leaders overcome challenges?

Show up. One leader shared the importance of being deliberate to speak up in meetings. When she interviewed for a senior leadership role, while the hiring manager was already aware of her capabilities and skills it was also important for other leaders to have more visibility of her skills and capabilities. Being deliberate in speaking up in meetings and choosing forums to increase visibility are important ways to show up.

"Say yes more than no; show up whenever you can. Be open minded, persistent, resilient and know that EVERYONE brings their own unique value, regardless of what others may think."

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Scientific**
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Daphne Ong
VP Human Resources
Boston Scientific Asia Pacific

Leave the comfort of home shores. Working in another country, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, is recommended in order to develop a global mindset and develop a sense of curiosity and courage. Leaders may be better prepared to deal with complexity and ambiguity in an unknown environment when away from the comforts of home. Even a short-term rotation to build critical relationships can be a key enabler.

"Studying abroad is just one of the many ways to get global experience; you can opt for an exchange program, or you could sign up as a volunteer in a global non-profit, or take up some mission-related work with a global development agency."



Wern-Yuen Tan
CEO
PepsiCo APAC

Broaden experiences. A senior leader with a large multi-national company dedicated his corporate success to his first role as a Police Officer in Singapore. He shared that at 26 years of age, he had over 100 officers reporting into him. The challenges he faced in that role made him adept at handling tough situations and trained him to have a solution orientation. Another leader shared how she made 'non-obvious' career moves, and those diverse experiences set her up for success in her current regional general manager (GM) role. Diverse experiences enabled her to understand different businesses, and she could empathize with ground-level realities much better when she took up the regional GM role.

Make your path. A leader shared that when her employer wanted her to move to the US, she convinced the leadership team at headquarters that she could serve the organization's interests better by being closer to clients in Asia. Eventually, she was able to take up a challenging global role while continuing to be based in Southeast Asia.

"Distance should not separate your ability to keep in tune with what international leadership wants; you need to be very clear on what success looks like on their terms and your terms and always keep the balance of that alignment."



Linda Seah
VP & GM, ASEAN & South Asia
Hologic, Inc.

Take career risks. One leader shared that talent may be worried that they may not have a bigger and better role to come back to when they repatriate following a global posting. She shared from her own experience that while there is uncertainty in such moves, it is also an unparalleled learning experience. Another leader shared that she made a mid-career shift from being a practicing lawyer to a corporate role in the contracts department of a large multi-national organization despite being cautioned against the move. She reflects that even though it was a career risk, she wouldn't be in her current CXO role if she had not had the courage to make that move.

Be adventurous. A leader in Singapore shared he learned an immense amount by simply travelling around the world. He shared that whenever he goes to another country, he tries to meet as diverse a group of people as he can, and that also helps develop new business opportunities.

"Having a diverse network is critical, and it is not about exchanging business cards at a professional meeting or a conference, but about making authentic connections with people; I don't even take business cards at AmCham meetings."

ALFATECH

Zach Wilson
Founder and Managing Director
Alfa Tech

What can organizations do to support the development of global Asian leaders?

Curate developmental roles. In a bid to prepare a local leader for an Asia-Pacific marketing director role, one organization gave the leader a developmental assignment as an adviser to the international marketing team. The role expected the leader to drive strategic initiatives across the globe, work across cultures, and flex his 'influencing muscle' to implement initiatives. The leader shared that he soon 'stepped out of his shell' and learned how to collaborate across borders and multiple time zones in addition to travelling extensively within and outside the region. This interim developmental role set the leader up for success when he eventually stepped into a marketing director role.

"While you may want to roll up your sleeves and jump into a global assignment, there is merit in stepping back and educating yourself first on culture, preferably in informal ways: have an informal lunch with a colleague, participate in another culture's festive celebrations where you live, speak to others that have previously been on assignments to gain their perspectives."



Timothy Lynch
Senior Director, HR
Boeing

Increase exposure to global leaders. A regional CXO shared how leaders in Asia tend to 'protect' their talent especially in potential career-defining interactions with global leaders, i.e., meetings with the global CEO or presenting to the board or global leadership team. While well-intentioned, this tendency to 'protect' talent may hurt their team's development in the long run. The CXO shared that her organization simulates such interactions through 'speed coaching,' where emerging young talent get 10 minutes with a senior executive to 'pitch' their thoughts and seek inputs and guidance from them. This exposure gives senior executives a chance to know top Singaporean (and Asian) talent, and likewise gives young high potentials an opportunity to prepare for and benefit from senior interactions.

"Immerse yourself in purpose, step up and speak up, be clear and authentic about who you are, and do not try and become someone else."

varian

Kenneth Tan
President, Oncology Systems
Asia Pacific & Japan (APJ)
Varian

Sponsor young talent. Organizations must encourage internal mentoring and sponsorships. One leader shared how her organization has benefited on the global leader development front by having global sponsors for local high-potential talent. She emphasized that it is a two-way learning, with the senior sponsor helping young leaders navigate their careers, while being reverse-mentored on new-age technologies and tools. Two-way learning through sponsorship opens up opportunities to provide valuable ground-level insights on local culture and business operations to senior leaders.



Celebrate and broadcast success stories. Not having enough local role models can be detrimental to local leaders' aspiration in regional or global roles. One organization has a practice of sending leaders of Asian ethnicity in headquarters on home-country rotations back in Asia. She shared how she witnessed a sudden shift in Singaporean leaders applying for global positions when the regional head was a local Singaporean, someone who had been rotated out of the headquarters for a 3-year stint in Singapore.

Curate lessons of experience. Interviewees opined that young Singaporean leaders must have more experiential learning in global positions. A CXO talked about multi-axis global rotations where high-potential leaders are sent on short term assignments in a different function, a different business, and a different country, to develop their ability to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty. Another leader shared her organization's experience of running a 3-year internal program, where 3 to 5 leaders are selected for a one-year stint at headquarters to build relationships and 'bridges,' followed by a one-year rotation in another country to build diversity of experience, finally spending the third year in the home country working on a regional or global assignment. Yet another leader shared that they have a 2-year program, where participants, selected after a rigorous process, are given a series of collaborative global projects to work on.

"As we move across countries, we need to unlearn and re-learn; what made us successful in one culture, may pull us back in another. We must also differentiate between 'perceived capability gaps,' and 'real gaps' that we need to plug in our global leadership journey"



Sowjanya Reddy
Asia-Pacific & Japan HR Head
HP Inc.

How has the hybrid work environment changed the development of global leaders?

In a hybrid work environment, there are both advantages and disadvantages for the development of global-ready leaders. Some organizations described the advantages of having virtual expatriates or 'virtual-pats' take on regional assignments without moving to another country. While this seems to be more applicable for non-client-facing roles, it has increased the pool of talent available for regional roles. Working in a hybrid environment also allows organizations to provide more leaders with exposure to regional and global responsibilities through cross-country and cross-cultural projects and assignments. On the flip side, leaders are also concerned that as it becomes easier to take on these regional roles based anywhere in the world, some roles may flow out of Singapore to other countries in the region.



As we move from pandemic to endemic COVID-19 and travel opens up, most organizations are eager to go back to physical rotations to develop a global-ready pool of Singaporean and Asian leaders. The general consensus continues to be that for those aspiring to take on senior regional and global roles, it is still ideal to experience living and working in another country immersed in a different culture and embracing diverse relationships.

"You have to be ready when the opportunity arises to step into a regional or global assignment; even during the current COVID times, when such openings for virtual projects and assignments come up, be ready to embrace those."

align

* invisalign | iTero

Julie Tay

Senior Vice President, Commercial Strategy
Align Technology

⁴ <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/jobs/sporeans-overcome-challenges-at-mnc-grow-into-global-leaders>

COVID-19

The Singapore Government has continued to introduce measures to mitigate the health and economic impact of COVID-19. To address the economic uncertainties brought about by COVID-19, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat announced that \$11 billion will be set aside in Budget 2021 for the COVID-19 Resilience Package. The Package focuses on three prongs: safeguarding public health and re-opening safely, supporting workers and businesses where needed, and helping sectors that are still under stress.⁵

In September 2021, Minister for Manpower Dr. Tan See Leng stated in a speech on a motion to secure Singaporeans' jobs and livelihood that the number of PMET job vacancies has increased since 2010 and has been at about 30,000 over the past five years across sectors: 4,300 unfilled PMET jobs in Infocomm, 4,100 in Finance, and 2,700 in Professional Services. These data show that despite the pandemic-related downturn, companies are still interested in hiring more workers but are unable to fill all available headcount.⁶

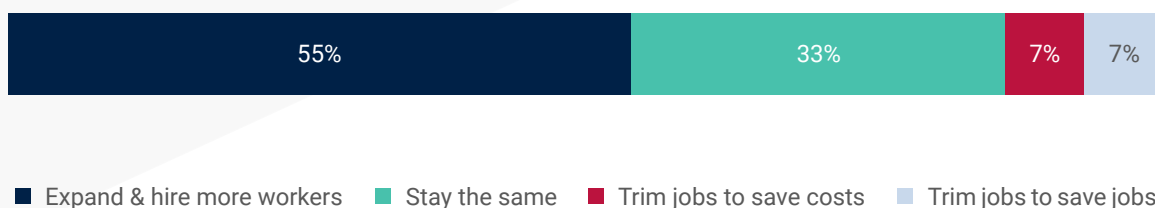
KEY FINDING 5

In the medium term, companies in Singapore plan to hire more workers and report limited reliance on support from the Government to retain workers.

Thanks to the improvement in economic and health outlook since early 2021, more organizations are looking to expand and hire more workers. Almost nine in 10 organizations report that they will either expand operations or will maintain status quo. There is also marked reduction (as compared to the previous year) in organizations leaning on government programs to retain workers.

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=40):



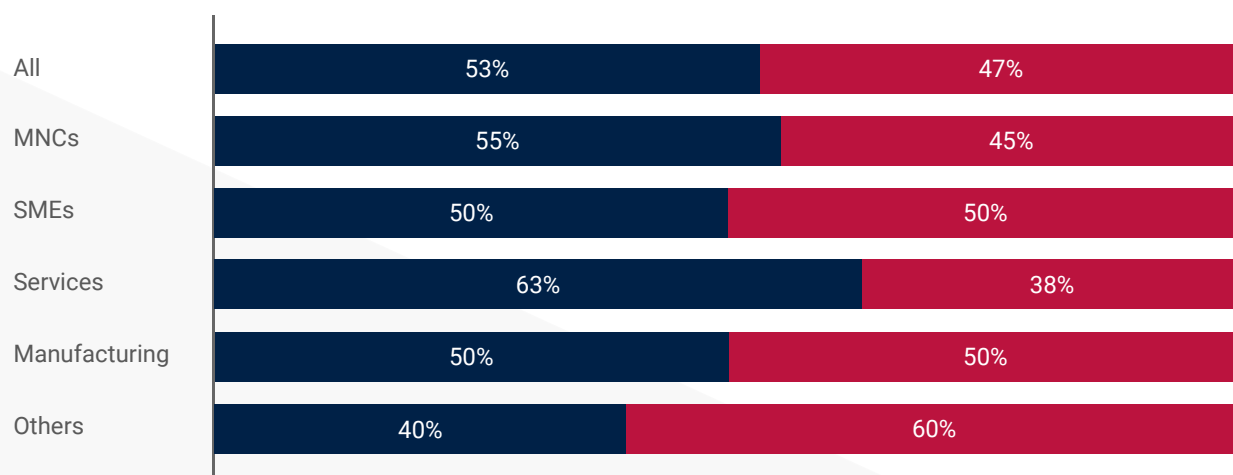
⁵ <https://www.gov.sg/article/budget-2021-covid-19-resilience-package>

⁶ <https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/speeches/2021/0914-speech-by-minister-for-manpower-dr-tan-see-leng-on-parliament-motion>

Figure 9. Government programs and worker retention

Q: Have the government programs announced in Budget 2021 been useful in helping your business retain workers during this time? (n=49)

**Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*



- Yes – the programs announced in the budgets have helped my company to retain workers
- No – the budgets have not been helpful for my company in retaining workers

KEY FINDING 6

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

At the time of the survey, the majority of firms (54%) believe their hiring strategies or practices would be permanently altered as a result of the pandemic with service and manufacturing sectors reporting maximum impact. Of those who did report re-strategizing of their firm's HR practices 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 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? (n=52)

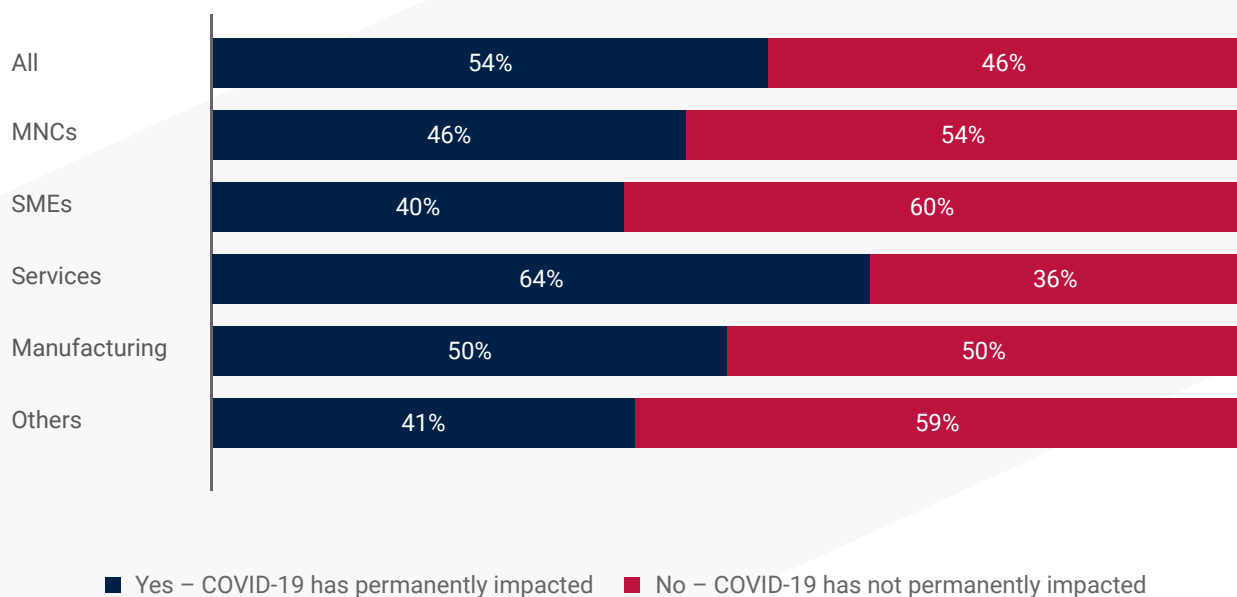
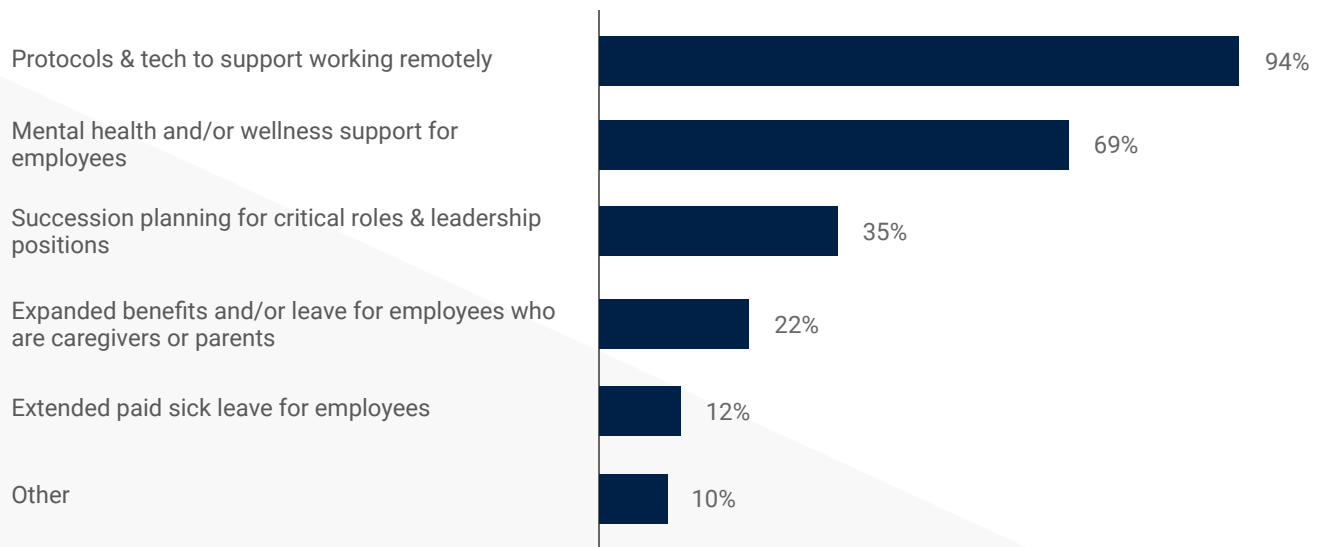


Figure 11. How HR practices have permanently changed as a result of COVID-19

Q: How has your company's HR practices permanently changed as a result of COVID-19? (Select all that apply). (n=51)



What employee well-being practices have worked well through the pandemic?



"We recognize that this is a difficult period for many employees, as such we launched the Employee Assistance Program. This tool offers a hybrid care system that combines digital self-care programs, along with virtual coaching sessions for their well-being. All employees are entitled to coaching credits where they can book a confidential session with a personal coach anytime."

We look for occasions to have fun and create an inclusive culture. We have cultural celebrations online involving games and prizes, such as during Hari Raya and National Day! We also organized a charity Zumba session which got employees physically moving for a good cause."



"'Focus Fridays' is a meeting-free Friday to allow employees time and space to prioritize specific tasks, complete with a curated playlist of different genres of music. Our leaders host periodic virtual connects with employees to address any concerns and just check in on their well-being."

For our Singapore-based employees, we introduced Employee Assistance Programme - an online support system for employees and their beneficiaries to seek practical information, including financial, legal, and family care resources, and counselling on a variety of topics."

“Leadership fireside chats – Regular skip-level leadership ‘fireside chats’ with each cohort group as check-ins on their well-being and forum to raise questions or issues.

Regional THRIVE program – A series of APAC-wide activities to encourage well-being, including inter-office ‘Health Challenge,’ monthly seminars on topics such as Posture, Nutrition, Decluttering and Mental Strength.

Language / how we talk to each other at team level – Respect of each other’s time and boundaries; employees empowered to push back on unreasonable hours or weekend work or encouraged to have zoom-free Fridays.”

in the wild

“As a design start-up, we are a lean team. For us, what really worked was having regular contact time and clear communications—assurance to the team that even though we are physically apart, we still have each other’s back. It is also about enjoying the light moments, sharing many laughs, and celebrating the little wins together.”

WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION

While there exists a strong link between workforce diversity and corporate resilience, the business case for diversity has become even more critical in recent times. Fundamentally, companies with high diversity are more resilient, creative, and adaptive to change. Yet robust corporate diversity, particularly at senior 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 consistently.

KEY FINDING 7

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

On the whole, Singapore companies have a good representation of local workers and women in their workforce. The majority of companies (68%) have predominately Singaporean workforces in Singapore. Similarly, just over half (57%), have Singapore-based workforce that are majority female.

Figure 12. 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=67)

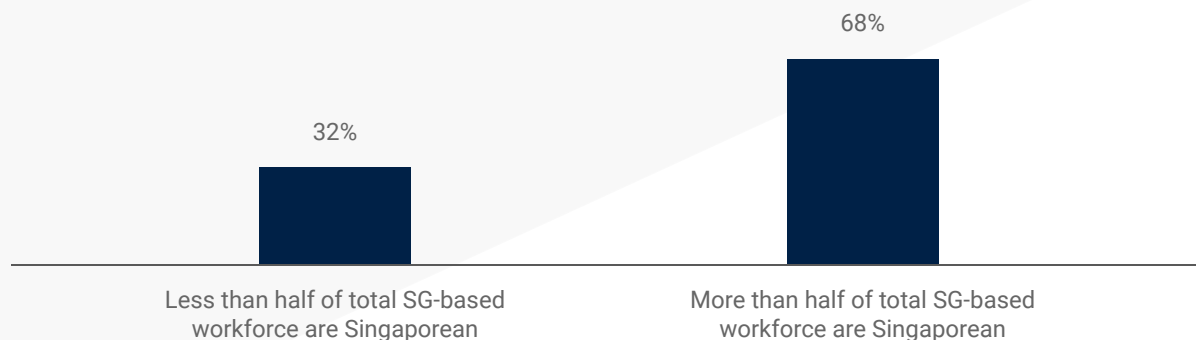
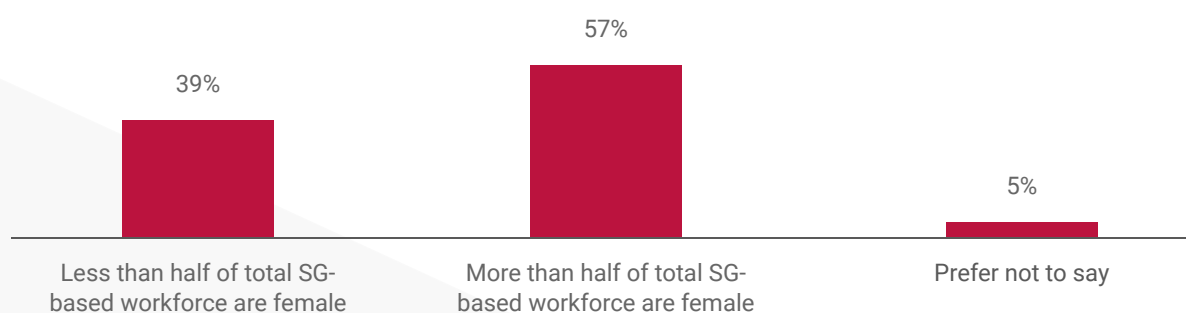


Figure 13. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: Of your total Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are women? (n=67)

**Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*



Singaporeans make up less than half of senior level employees at 52% of companies surveyed. Similarly, women make up less than half of senior level employees at 58% of companies surveyed.

Figure 14. 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=67)

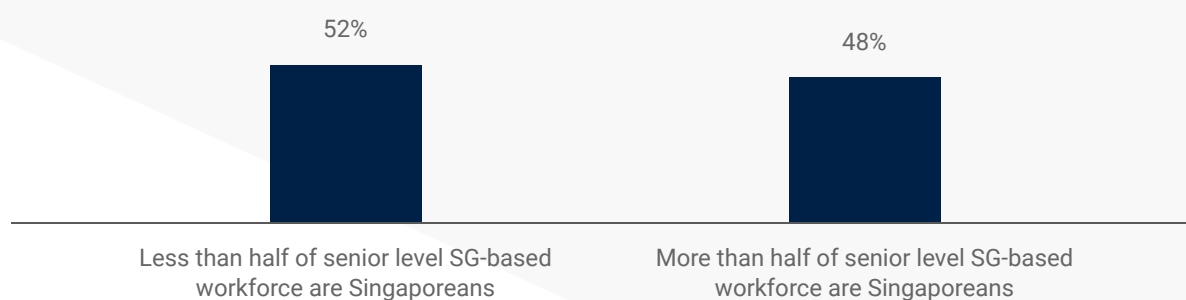
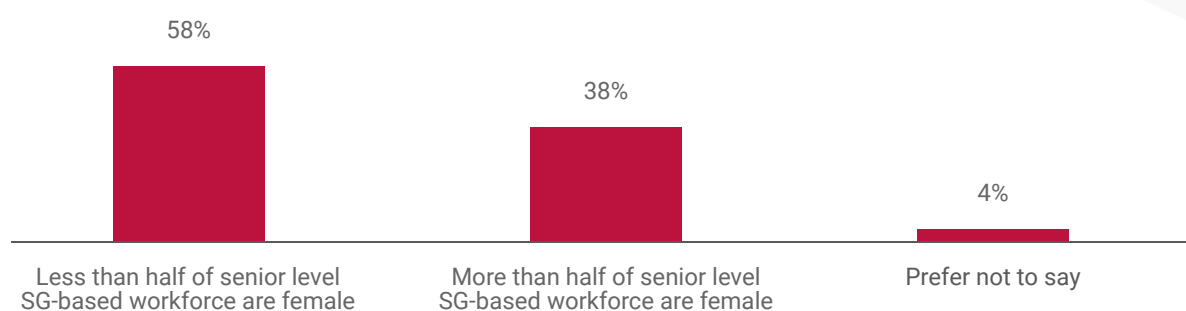


Figure 15. Proportion of total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising women

Q: Of your total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce, what percentage are women? (n=67)



KEY FINDING 8

Companies that have predominately local workforces also hire more women.

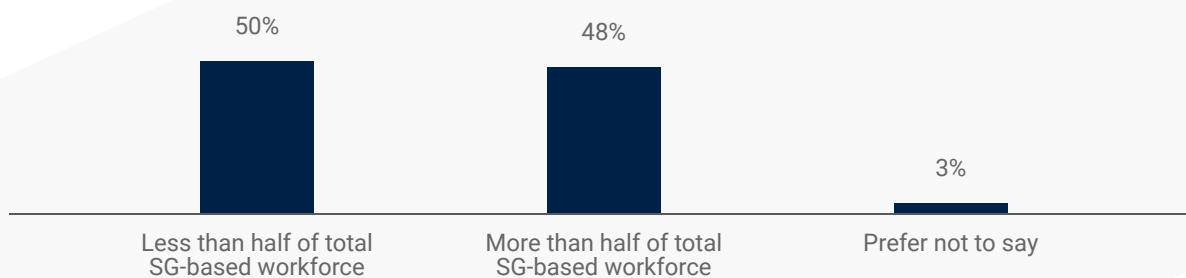
Interestingly, AmCham member organizations that employ more local workforce also hire more women. Seven in 10 organizations that hire a majority local workforce have more women.

Figure 16. Proportion of total Singapore-based workforce comprising women

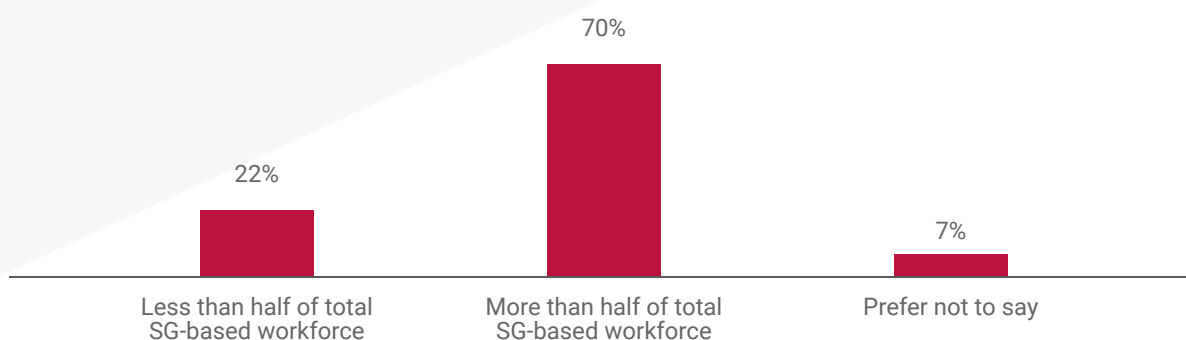
Q: What percentage of your total Singapore-based workforce comprises of women? (n=67)

**Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

*Companies with predominately foreign
Singapore-based workforces*



*Companies with predominately local
Singapore-based workforces*



KEY FINDING 9

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 organizations, 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. Organizations also report that candidates have unrealistic expectations

Figure 17. 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).



KEY FINDING 10

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

Although 48% of firms surveyed have a senior-level workforce with more than 50% Singapore citizen and PRs, a lack of necessary specialized skills and appropriate experience are the biggest obstacles preventing them from hiring additional local talent for senior level roles.

Figure 18. 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=66)

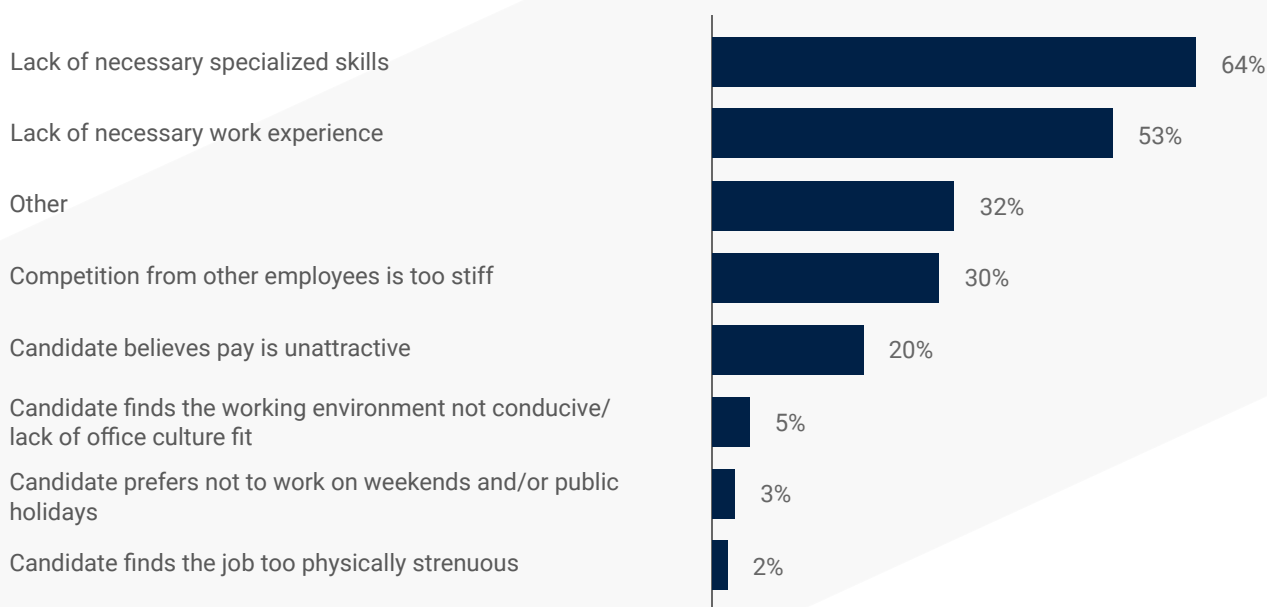
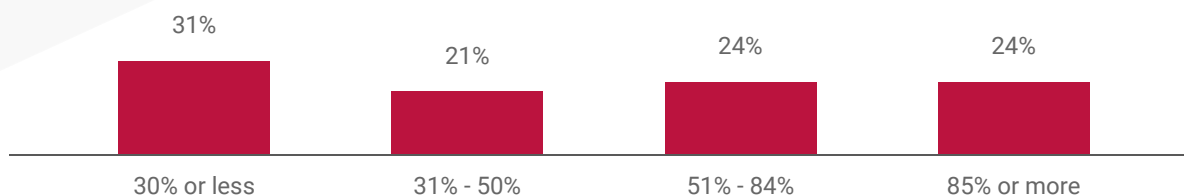


Figure 19. Proportion of total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprising Singapore citizens and PRs

Q: What percentage of your total current senior level (manager or above) Singapore-based workforce comprises of Singapore citizens (incl. PRs)? (n=67)



KEY FINDING 11

More can be done to increase the number of Singaporeans in regional or leadership positions.

As compared to 2020, more organizations report that the majority of Singaporean workforce in the country has regional responsibilities. However, few organizations have Singaporean leaders in senior regional roles in ASEAN (outside of Singapore).

Figure 20. Proportion of total current Singaporean and PRs workforce, based in Singapore, working in regional role

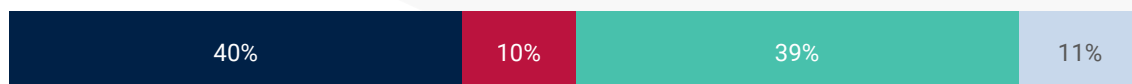
Q: Of your total current Singaporean and PR workforce based in Singapore, what percentage work in a regional role? (n=94)



- 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 21. 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)



- 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

How Mastercard Prepared Me for Life Outside of My Comfort Zone



Contributed by Aileen Chew, Country Manager, Thailand and Myanmar, Mastercard

I have always loved living and working in my home country of Singapore. This place has offered me so much —safety, convenience, and plenty of fantastic food!— but at the same time, in all my years here I had never truly left my comfort zone. I didn't fully appreciate that until, in 2019, I was appointed by Mastercard to head up their operations in Thailand and Myanmar—my first role where I would be living and working outside of Singapore.

Moving to Bangkok was, and still is, an incredible experience, but it's not been without its challenges: complex nuances in communication, a very different market and economy, and vastly different bureaucracies and processes, to name a few. Luckily, when it came time to tackle these challenges head on, I felt like I was well and truly prepared.

By the time I took on the Country Manager position, I had already moved to Thailand and worked in a market development role for six months. This role saw me working under the then Country Manager, and provided me with a very thorough transition, such that by the time I officially took over the role, it didn't feel like a major change at all. Though this period was hugely valuable to me, it may have been even more valuable to my colleagues, our in-market partners, and government stakeholders, as we were essentially given a half-year introduction to one another, allowing for a more seamless change in leadership.

In some ways, I've been preparing for this role from the time that I joined the company in 2016. I've been fortunate to have access to a wealth of materials through Mastercard's 'Learning Academies on

Degreed' platform, which is an internal, self-directed learning tool with in-house courses, or through partnerships with established online learning institutions like Harvard Business Publishing, LinkedIn, and Coursera. In addition to learning about important developments in our industry like open banking and blockchain technology, having access to deep insights about the most successful practices across our markets was, and still is, a resource to which I often turn to help guide my decision making.

However, there's almost always a gap between what one learns in a seminar or training course, and what one experiences on the job. Although my previous work with Mastercard required me to take on leadership roles, a Country Manager position is a big step up from leading a product team. Mastercard's 'Leadership Now' program was crucial in helping me to build the decision-making capabilities needed to take on this next stage in my career.

Run over the course of multiple days, Leadership Now is essentially a market simulator for Mastercard, where teams are able to make their own choices across areas such as how and where to invest, and which market segments to focus on. Each day, the simulator would calculate indicators such as our P&L, our level of innovation, and our market share to determine who was performing best.

Being able to take part in a competitive simulation was a priceless experience. This was an opportunity for me to war-game different strategies and make decisions that could be hugely



consequential in real life, but in an environment with zero consequences where I could be free to take risks and learn from mistakes.

Another incredibly valuable resource for me has been Mastercard's 'Women Who Lead' network, which put women at all levels of the company in dialogue with successful women leaders. I've found that the network has offered me different insights at different stages of my time with Mastercard. Early on, hearing other women's stories about how they pursued their careers, how they built and led teams, and how they were able to find strength in diversity was crucial to my own growth.

However, now that I've taken on a more senior role in the company, young women are seeking advice from me, and using me as a kind of sounding board for their own ideas. What's remarkable about this is that I find these are some of my more important learning experiences, as their questions and experiences often force me to reconsider my own priors. I love that I'm able to help these aspiring young people, and in doing so, I'm pushed out of my own bubble in such a way that I feel I can become a leader with a greater sense of empathy and understanding.

I am truly grateful that Mastercard invests in their people and I have personally and professionally benefitted from their leadership programs and learning platforms that are accessible to all. But the first steps on my path to becoming Country Manager were my own. I realized that I wanted a role that would see me working more closely with customers and partners, and so I sought advice, asked questions, and started trying to fill gaps in my knowledge. Oftentimes we feel that asking others for guidance may reveal a weakness or a lack of understanding, but I believe people are more likely to see it as being indicative of enthusiasm and determination. After all, in my experience all of us are still learning.

RECRUITMENT

More than ever before, with disruptions due to COVID-19, as fewer organizations look to expand their workforce as compared to previous years, it is critical that incoming talent has future-ready capabilities.

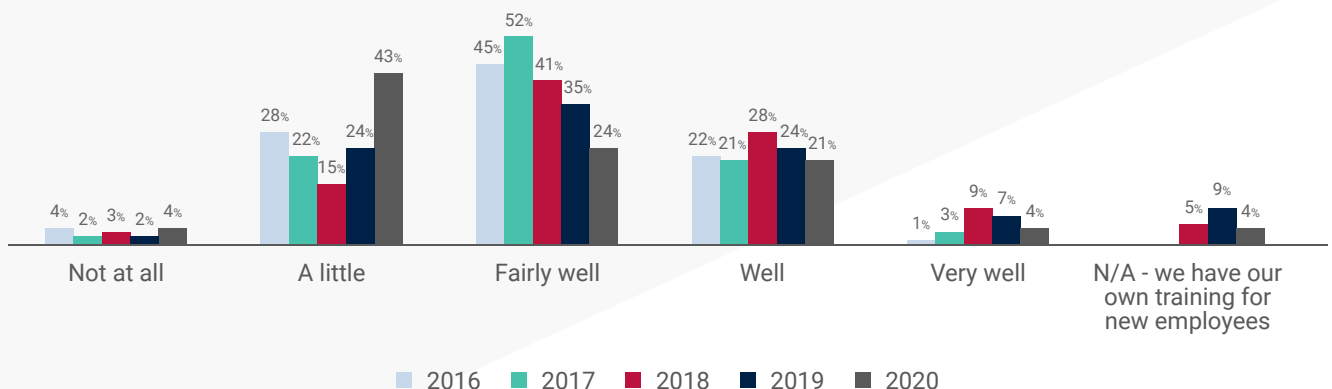
KEY FINDING 12

Companies are less optimistic about the ability of local universities to prepare graduates for the workforce.

Despite efforts from the Singapore government to collaborate with local universities to improve market-readiness of graduating students, companies report that more needs to be done to prepare new graduates to succeed in the workplace. Only 25% of respondents perceive that the institutions prepare their students “well” to “very well” for work, a 6% drop from the previous year.

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. (n=68)



KEY FINDING 13

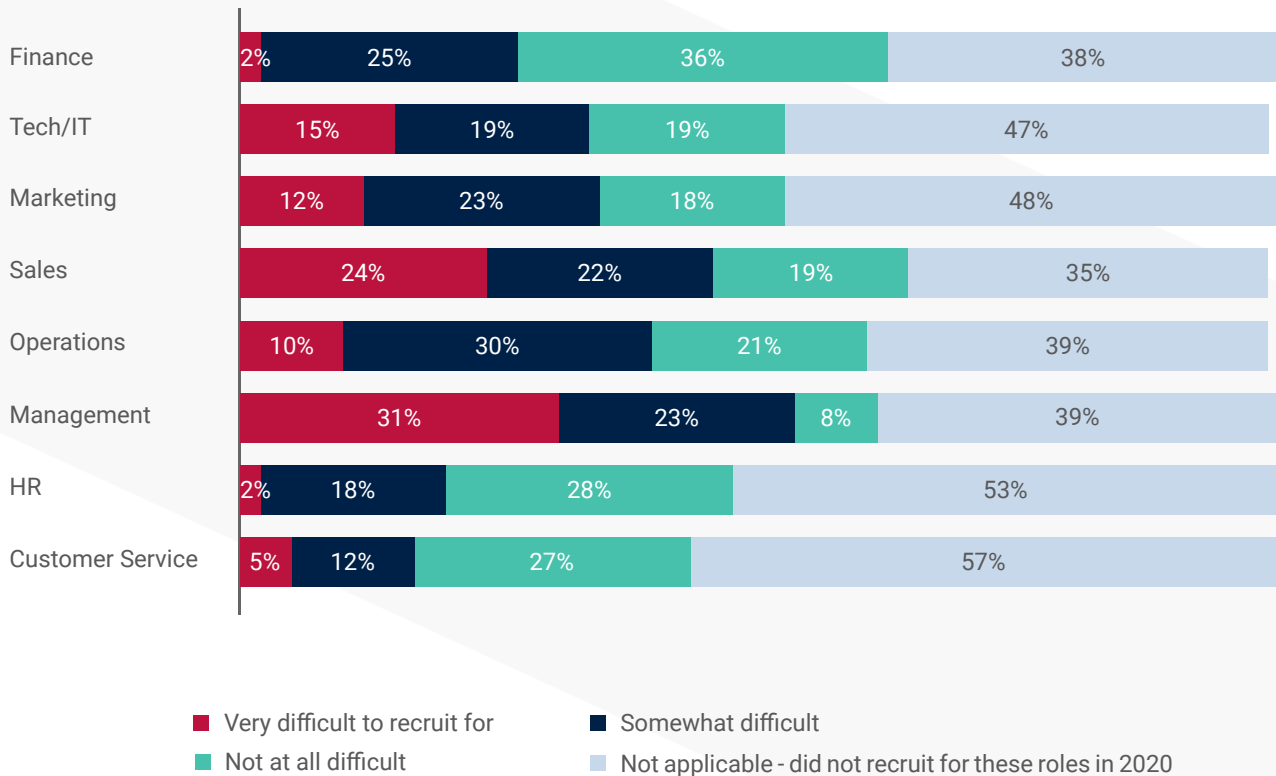
Management positions continue to be the most difficult to recruit locally.

Organizations report challenges in finding a robust pool of Singaporean leaders to management and sales roles. In sharp contrast, finance, HR, and customer service functions report abundant local talent.

Figure 23. 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=60)

*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



KEY FINDING 14

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

Among mid- to senior-level talent, critical thinking, technical, entrepreneurial, resilience and leadership skills are the hardest to find.

Figure 24. 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=67)



SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE

From Classrooms to the Workplace



Contributed by Weirong Chang, Head of Strategy and Chief of Staff, and Brian Rogove, CEO, XCL Education

The importance of high schools in shaping the workforce

In the words of former US President John F. Kennedy, children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future. A conversation about human capital may feel incomplete without considering the nurturing of the young to become future contributors of society. High school is a formative and pivotal part of a young person's transition into adulthood. It is when they decide how to relate to the world, what kind of relationships to form, how to contribute to society, and ultimately how to be happy.

While it is ingrained that a university degree is the de facto path to success and a stamp of endorsement of a person's abilities, the value proposition of a university degree has lessened in recent years with rising costs, decreasing confidence, and growing acceptance of compelling alternatives by students and the job market. For those that decide to apply to university, students are required as a pre-requisite for admission to select a course of study that sets them on a specific vocation or career path. It is a decision that commits them to the next four years in university which consequentially opens and closes doors thereafter. All these decisions are made prior to setting foot into the university, at the young age of 17-18.

Some students may get it right, others are not as lucky. Many fall into the latter category. Statistics show that it is challenging for students to make the right decision on university majors and career paths. 80% of US college students change majors¹, 40% never graduate², and only a quarter end up with a job that is related to their degree³. The majority

will change careers many times during their lifetime. According to a JP Morgan poll, only 33% of employers agreed that educational institutions were graduating students with the required skills to meet employers' needs⁴.

It is therefore crucial that students have access to the best opportunities and information to inform their post-secondary decisions as early as possible. This is why high schools play such a critical role in doing so.

Preparing students for the jobs of tomorrow

At XCL Education and across our schools, our mission is to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow – be it defined as careers, aspirations, callings, or obligations for the greater good of society. A few ways that we venture to do so at the XCL World Academy in Singapore is via:

1) Maximum exposure, personalized pathways – This ensures our students are aware of all options relevant to them and supporting them in delving into specific areas of interest. Some examples of how we strive to do so:

- We have brought forward university and career counselling to students as early as grade 8 (~14 years old) to encourage them to start thinking about their futures early.
- We have launched the XCL Dialogues, a regular series of wide-ranging conversations with acclaimed and respected individuals who have made a difference, that aims to inspire students with the best minds.

- With the International Baccalaureate – Career Related programme (IBCP), students collaborate directly with universities on advanced courses ranging from design to aeronautics and engineering.
- We have even started an e-Sports program complete with performance facilities and industry partnerships in order to stay ahead of emerging trends.
- Supporting all the students and initiatives are highly experienced and passionate trained educators that personalize learning at the classroom level and mentor every individual based on their needs and aspirations.

2) '21st Century Skills' – Trends such as the democratization of information, rise of AI, climate change, and geopolitical shifts need no further elaboration. Our students will need to navigate a world that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. A quarter of jobs will be lost to AI⁵, and two-thirds of jobs for students entering school don't exist yet⁶.

- Through the inquiry based, interdisciplinary way of teaching and learning, we strive to prepare students to be critical thinkers who are comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, as well as leaders and team players.
- By ensuring diversity (currently spanning 60 nationalities, with no nationality concentrations) and offering a wide variety of languages (including a Mandarin bilingual programme), we hope to nurture global citizens and stewards of the planet.
- Our innovation and design program exposes our students to human-centric principles that apply to all problems.
- Our socio-emotional counsellors work closely with our students to ensure they have the tools and mindset they need to remain resilient and steadfast in their pursuits.

3) Solid educational foundations – This ensures our students master the fundamentals of knowledge and demonstrate good academic results to maximize their options moving forward. Solid educational foundations are also about providing an up-to-date environment and conducive space for the students to thrive. In support of this, we have started construction of a new purpose-built innovation hub to support the expansion of our high school offerings, complete with the latest in learning technology.

Opportunities for enterprise to play a role

Enterprises, both for-profit and non-profit, have historically accessed universities and vocational schools for talent. Enterprises, however, engage much less with high schools – understandably so, as university students are perceived to be more ready for the workforce in the near term. Recruiting from universities is a time-tested model that has served enterprises well with no real need to deviate from. In today's hyper competitive talent market, however, benefits to enterprises can be substantial in engaging students earlier in high schools.

1) Future talent pipeline – By reaching students earlier in their educational journey, enterprises have the unique opportunity to build relationships with these future partners by keeping them informed of the newest industry trends, roles, and talent needs as they evolve. By engaging with students earlier, they can provide students with unique perspectives to better prepare for the future that they want. As an outcome, enterprises develop trust, loyalty, and advocacy with students, which goes a long way in building reputation, awareness, and a strong pipeline of top talent.

2) Capable contributors – Through online resources, students today teach themselves almost any skill they desire, and apply them at an impressive level and standard. This empowerment gives them the confidence and motivation to solve problems and create solutions today, instead of deferring to university. Occasionally, extraordinary talent emerges. Last year at the XCL World



Academy, high school students created a brain-machine interface capable of operating a robotic hand, a functional low-cost bioprinter, a social tool to help hospitalized children through tough times, and a smart mirror for patients with dementia. With skills that are highly marketable, high school students can be great additions to teams, contributing unconstrained ideas and diversity.

3) Upcoming trends – By working directly with schools and students, enterprises will be closely in touch with the students’ ever evolving career, lifestyle, and tertiary education preferences. Importantly, it also gives insight into the values that they hold, and alignment to their organizations.

Where to begin?

There are many opportunities for enterprise to engage with high school students and play a greater role in helping them make more informed decisions about their future. Some avenues include:

- Speaking to students in information sessions and company tours.
- Building internships/ skill development programmes, such as Microsoft’s High School Program, the Computer Science Summer Institute at Google, Kaiser Permanente LAUNCH Programme, and NASA’s high school programme to name a few.

- Offering scholarships for promising students to advance in their chosen fields of study.
- Organizing competitions such as hackathons and innovation contests to crowdsource ideas and identify budding talent.

[XCL Education](#) invites you to partner with us in bringing the world to our students. Based in Singapore, we serve 30,000 students across our private and international schools, pre-schools, and enrichment centres across Southeast Asia. Through our schools, programmes, partnerships, and network, we can be the bridge between enterprise and education. Please send your enquiries to contact@xcledu.com.

⁷ <https://localnews8.com/news/2018/10/12/nces-report-about-80-percent-of-college-students-change-major-at-least-once/>

⁸ <https://educationdata.org/college-dropout-rates>

⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/05/20/only-27-percent-of-college-grads-have-a-job-related-to-their-major/>

¹⁰ <https://www.nacweb.org/talent-acquisition/trends-and-predictions/is-there-really-a-skills-gap/>

¹¹ <https://slate.com/technology/2021/03/job-loss-automation-robots-predictions.html#:~:text=In%20February%2C%20McKinsey%20Global%20Institute,economic%20dislocation%20of%20COVID%2D19>

¹² <https://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/chapter-1-the-future-of-jobs-and-skills/>

WORK PASS APPLICATION

Alongside workforce employability, the Singapore government continues to strengthen its legal frameworks and regulations to promote the hiring of local talent. Upholding Singapore's reputation as an international business hub requires a free flow of talent while maintaining a strong Singapore core.

KEY FINDING 15

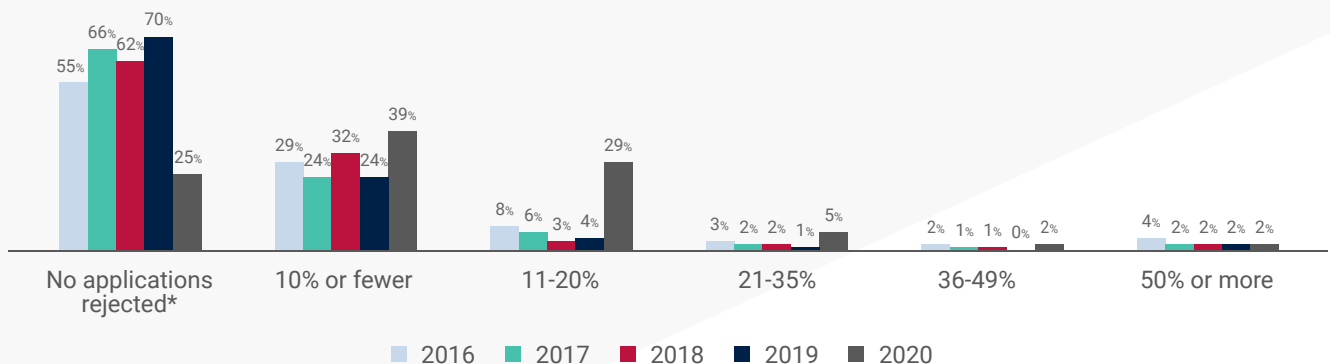
Despite growing awareness of available resources and application requirements, work pass application rejection rates have increased.

More work pass applications were rejected in 2021 as compared to previous years largely due to pandemic-induced pressures. In particular, there was an increase in EP renewals being turned down possibly due to the raising of requirements for EPs, including higher qualifying salaries.

Figure 25. Percentage of submitted work pass applications rejected

Q: What percentage of your submitted work pass applications have been rejected? (n=65)

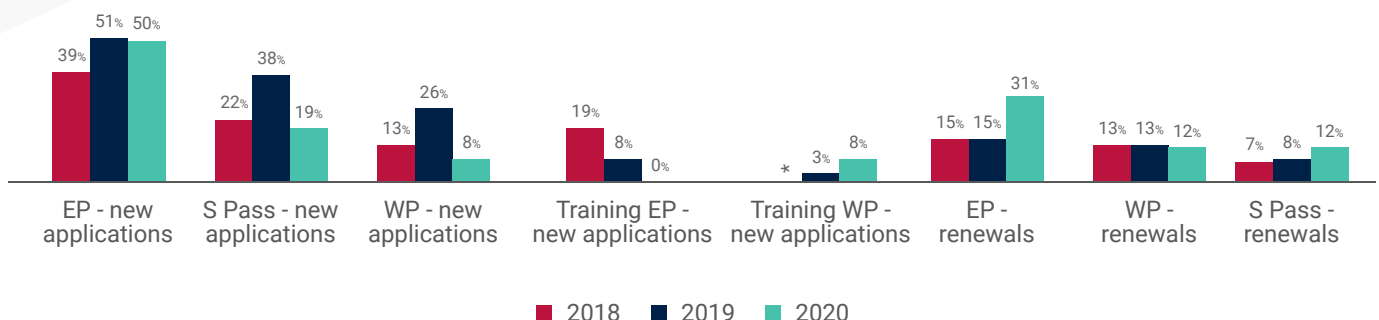
*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



*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 26. Classifications of work pass applications rejected

Q: Which classifications of work pass applications were rejected this year? (Select all that apply). (n=26)



*Data not available for 2018

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=38)

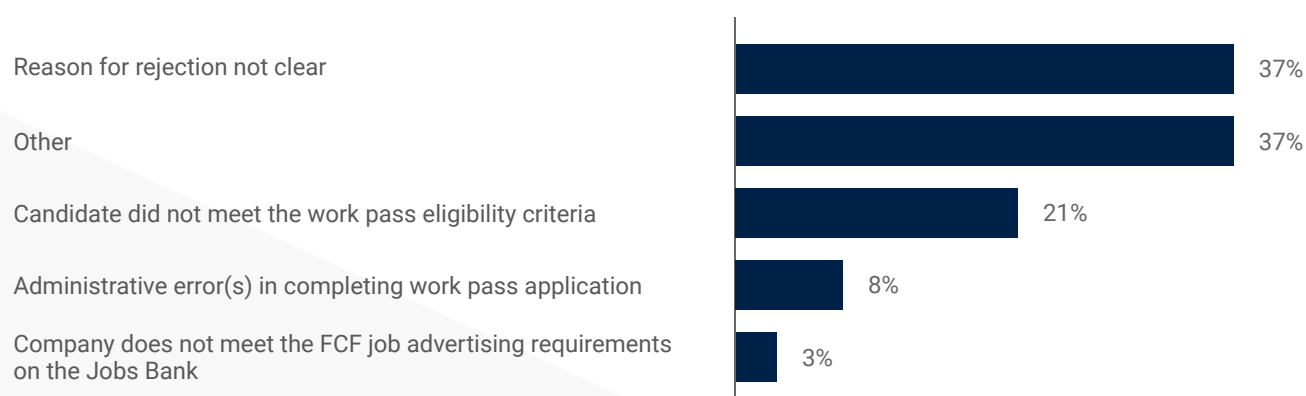


Figure 28. Use of MOM resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying

Q: Has your company used any of MOM's resources to determine eligibility of work pass applications prior to applying in 2020? (n=53)

**Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

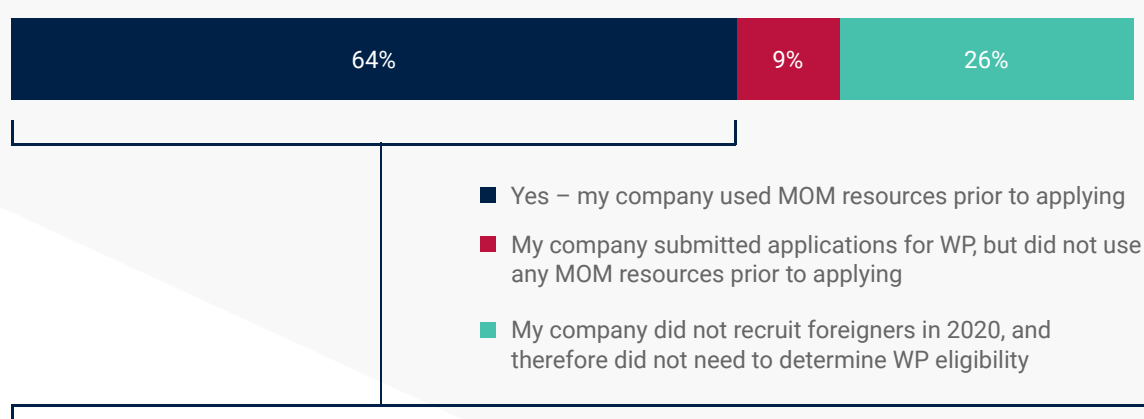
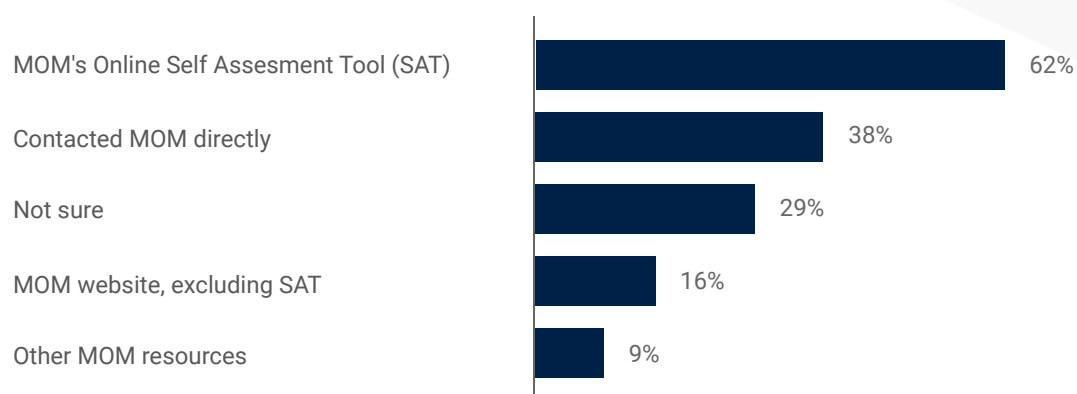


Figure 29. MOM resources used in 2020

Q: Which MOM resources did your company use in 2020? (Select all that apply). (n=55)



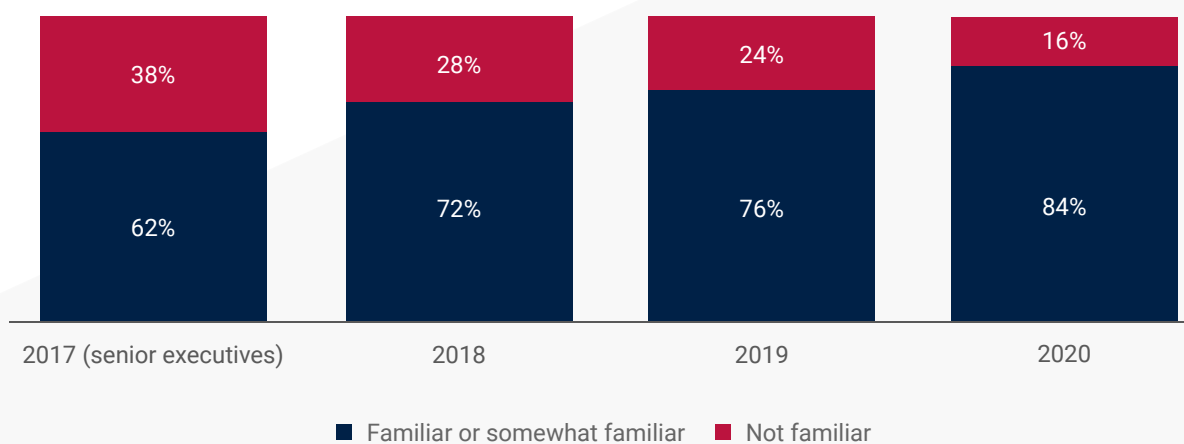
KEY FINDING 16

Familiarity with the Fair Consideration Framework has increased.

While work pass rejection rates climbed in the past year, more organizations report familiarity with the government's Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) requirements.

Figure 30. Familiarity with the Fair Consideration Framework

Q: Are you familiar with the Fair Consideration Framework? (n=68)



KEY FINDING 17

Overall increase in adoption of hiring and retention programs for local workers. However, such programs' adoption are still low for older workers.

As the pandemic impacted some industries more than the others, more organizations utilized the government's programs to convert employees from other industries. For older workers however, only one in five organizations report utilization of related government programs.

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

Q: Has your company utilized any government programs to hire local workers, e.g. Career Conversion Programs, Job Growth Incentive? (n=59)

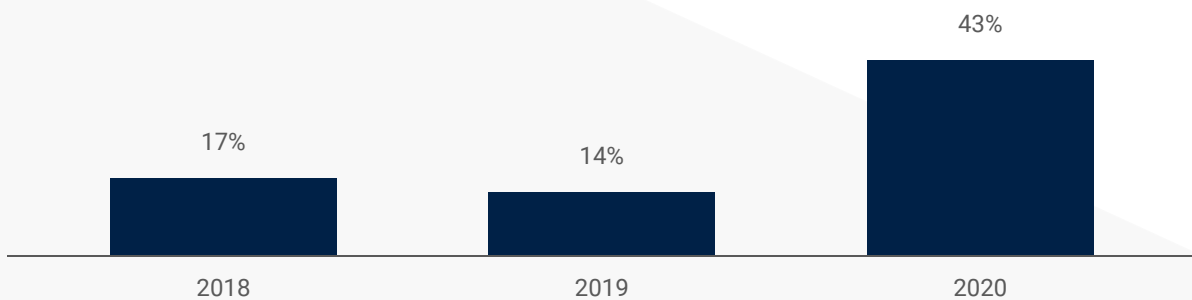
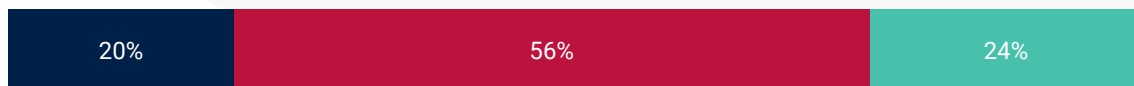


Figure 32. Utilization of government programs to support hiring or retention of older workers

Q: Has your company utilized any government programs to support hiring or retention of older workers? (n=59)



■ Yes – have utilized ■ No – have not utilized ■ Unaware of such programs

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Sourced from AmCham's membership, 95 senior executives completed the 2021 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 July 1 – August 24, 2021.

Company Size¹³

MNCs: 68%

SMEs: 32%

Primary Sector

Services: 43%

Manufacturing: 19%

Others: 38%

Profile of HR Teams in Respondent Companies:

How many employees are on your HR team?

None	12%
1-5 employees	39%
6-10 employees	11%
11-20 employees	12%
More than 20 employees	27%

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

Talent attraction	73%
Employee experience & relations	71%
HR business partner	69%
Performance and rewards	68%
Talent management	67%
Organization development & learning	54%
Ops & technology	41%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	21%

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

Singapore only	14%
Southeast Asia (including Singapore)	18%
Asia-Pacific (including Singapore)	40%
Global	11%
We do not have an HR team in Singapore	17%

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.

SPECIAL PERSPECTIVE

Mindfulness, the Predicting Brain, and Decision Making in a VUCA World



Contributed by Juan Humberto Young and Jochen Reb, Singapore Management University.

The last two years have brought to the foreground more acutely than ever, the difficulties of living and managing in our postmodern society characterized by staggering volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity - widely recognized under the acronym VUCA. A crucial challenge is how organizations can thrive in such an environment. We believe that increasing mindful strategic awareness at all organizational levels plays an important role in meeting this challenge, and recent advances in how the mind works inform us how.

The familiar view of how the mind works presupposes a process of reactions to stimuli whereby the mind registers a stimulus – either an external percept or an internal sensation - and generates a reaction based on this input. In contrast, new discoveries in neuroscience suggest that the mind is in a constant process of predicting. For example, the feeling of thirst is conceived as not as resulting from dehydration, but as a prediction that dehydration would result from not drinking now, thus prompting action to address problems (such as dehydration) even before they arise.

The capacity to anticipate is vital. World class athletes, for example, are able to anticipate the unfolding game better than their less-skilled peers, whether it is predicting the space and time where and when a ball is heading or a punch is landing. In other words, beyond their physical skills, world class athletes are first and foremost world class predictors in their game. And this makes sense, since simply reacting in competitive environments would always be a fraction too late. The edge is in anticipating the future.

This capacity to anticipate – or strategic awareness – applies to organizations and societies as well, and it is both more challenging and more valuable in today's VUCA environment. And, it applies to seemingly minor decisions (such as whether to wear a mask) or to major decisions such as whether and how to diversify the workforce that may transcend personnel concerns and spur innovation or impact the firm in other ways. All these choices depend on the ability to anticipate what could happen in the future.

The question then is obviously whether this capacity to predict accurately and with far-sightedness can be trained. In our view it is possible. In looking at the most common, natural activity of any human being what stands out is the ability to making decisions. This indicates where we should concentrate training and personal development: improving people's capacity of skillful decision-making. Here is where *mindfulness practice*, the ancient practice of awareness and self-observation, is of great value, especially in a form adapted to the challenges of our VUCA world. In this context, more than practicing mindfulness in its original intention of personal enlightenment and transcendence, or as a method to reduce stress and support mental health, mindfulness practice serves to develop the capacity to make skillful decisions and thrive on the challenges and vicissitudes of life today.

What do we mean in concrete terms? We are referring to a mindset beyond quantitative or procedural decision analysis techniques; to a strategically aware mindset that allows envisaging possible new directions and their consequences.



This is the main skill that needs to be trained for: building strategic awareness that will feed skillful decision-making processes enabling people, organizations, and institutions to predict outcomes that will satisfy their needs without harming others and the environment.

At SMU, we offer training methodology called Mindfulness-based Strategic Awareness Training (MBSAT) that is designed to help people improve their strategic awareness and enhance their capacity for skillful decision-making. In the MBSAT training, participants learn over eight sessions, once a week over a period of two months, techniques and practices that enable them to process information from the environment and their own internal milieu in a more effective way. They learn to expand their perceptual abilities by amplifying their competency to read cognitive data and incorporate sensorial, emotional and behavioral information for an enriched pool of data, called BETA in MBSAT, the acronym for body sensations, emotions, thoughts, and action impulses.

During the two months of training, the participants learn to recognize hindrances to their development, mostly in the form of legacy beliefs, fixed ideas and habits that impede them from moving forward and achieving more sustainable well-being.

This is of crucial importance in our fast-changing society. Individuals and organizations unable to adapt to constantly evolving circumstances quickly drop out from the societal and economic network, and lose the ability to operate effectively in whatever endeavors they are engaged in.

Through mindfulness-based training such as MBSAT, individuals learn to keep optimizing their portfolio of beliefs as the necessary condition to make skillful decisions in work and life.

Further Reading and Information: Mindfulness-based Strategic Awareness Training by Juan Humberto Young, Wiley 2017
https://www.amazon.com/Mindfulness-Based-Strategic-Awareness-Training-Individuals-dp-111893797X/dp/111893797X/ref=mt_other?_encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=1629405663

Mindfulness Initiative @ SMU: <https://business.smu.edu.sg/mindfulness>

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ABOUT AMCHAM SINGAPORE



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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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