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Singapore employees least engaged in Asia, study finds



Office crowd in the Central Business District. PHOTO: ST FILE

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Employees in Singapore are the least engaged among major Asian markets, according to a new study.

The term refers to how workers relate to their companies.

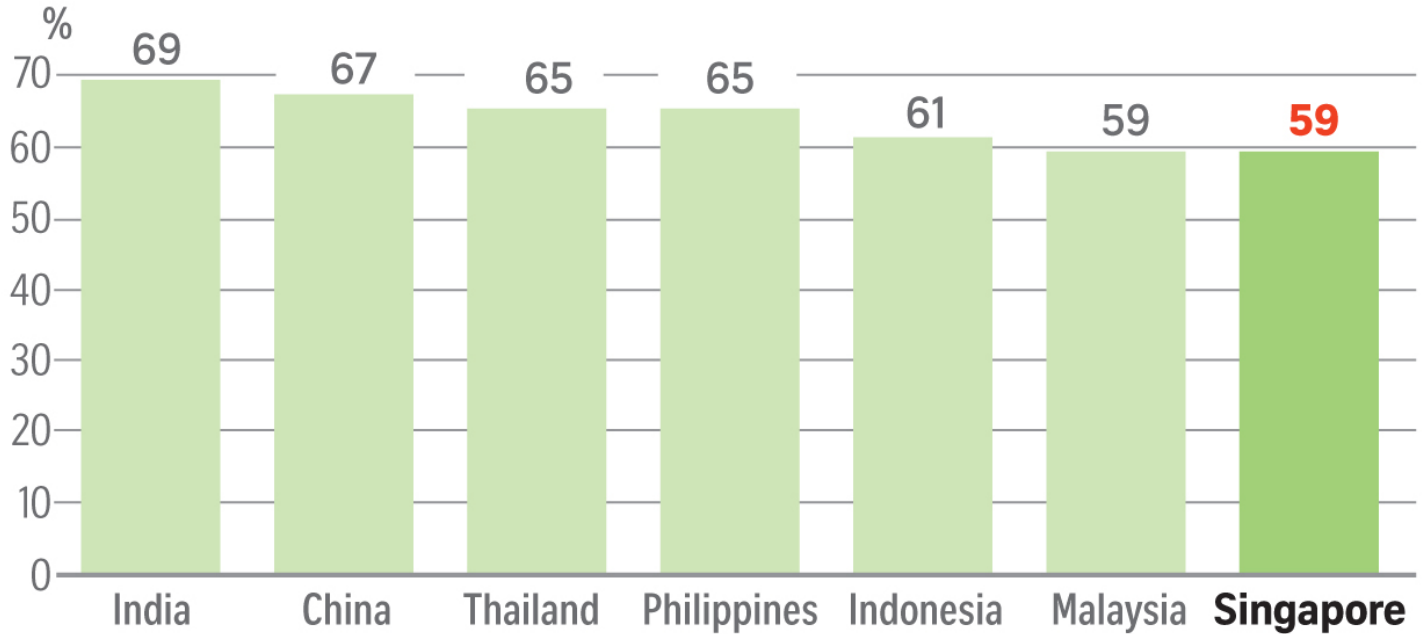
This is measured by asking staff if they are motivated to give their best at their jobs, if they say positive things about their organisation and if they intend to stay for a long time.

The annual survey noted that Singapore's employee engagement score fell by 4 percentage points to 59 per cent in 2016 - a stark contrast to 2015, when an increase of 3 percentage points was recorded.

The study by talent firm Aon Hewitt suggests that workers here feel less meaningfully invested in their jobs, a trend seen most prominently among younger employees.

Millennials - people under the age of 34 - indicated a dimmer view of the ways in which organisations involve and manage their staff.

Employee engagement scores



Source: AON HEWITT STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Mr Josh Goh, marketing director of recruitment firm ManpowerGroup, said better communication is crucial to keep employees invested.

"Training and development is key to retraining Singapore millennials. In the last two years, we observed that employers focus more on what employees have to offer instead of how they can be trained and developed," he added.

"Employers will need to have more 'career conversations' with their employees to find out their limitations and strengths, and work with them towards their goals. This needs to be a regular process, not an appraisal."


Workers in China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines were found to be more invested in their jobs than Singapore staff.

Aon Hewitt also found that, on the whole, employees in the Asia-Pacific region were less engaged in 2016 than they were in 2015.

Its research also showed that a rise in employee engagement is linked to higher revenue growth.

The inverse happens when engagement levels fall - businesses experience greater turnover, higher absenteeism, lower customer satisfaction and, ultimately, poor financial performance.

"As organisations strive to fuel growth, they must... recognise top contributors using a blend of financial and non-financial rewards such as development opportunities," said Mr Stephen Hickey, an Aon Hewitt partner.

 Employee engagement scores