

# 2016 Employee Engagement Trends: Singapore Lags with Alarming Fall in Perception Scores among Millennials

- Sharp fall in millennial perception scores for key engagement drivers, including talent practices and diversity & inclusion
- Overall APAC engagement scores rise by 5pts. but Singapore still behind at 3pts.

**SINGAPORE, 30 JUNE 2016** – Perception scores among millennials fell by an alarming 5 points in the area of ‘talent & staffing’—which refers to the talent attraction, promotion, and retention practices of an organisation, as well as its ability to allocate appropriate and adequate resources to get the job done, according to the 2016 Trends in Global Employee Engagement study by Aon Hewitt, the global talent, retirement, and health solutions business of Aon plc (NYSE: AON).

Perception scores for the same demographic also fell by 5 points in terms of diversity & inclusion, and by 3 points in autonomy as well as work-life balance.

Millennials—those born between 1979 and 2000—are the largest generation in the Singapore workforce today. There are 1.2 million millennials in the island state, or 22 percent of resident population. As their career expectations and aspirations grow more demanding, Singapore employers face great pressure to take urgent action to engage with this significant proportion of the workforce.

Overall, employees in Singapore are less engaged this year than their Asia Pacific counterparts. While engagement scores rose from 60 percent in 2014 to 65 percent in 2015 across Asia Pacific, the score in Singapore rose by only 3 points—from 60 percent to 63 percent.

## Asia Rising

The news gets better when looking out to the rest of Asia. Anchored by two massive economies in China and India, employee engagement over the last year has risen the most in these high-growth markets—8 points in China, 5 points in India, and a whopping 13 points in the Philippines.

Stephen Hickey, Partner and Executive Sponsor, Employee Engagement Practice—Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, Aon Hewitt said: “More and more companies in Asia are focusing on the overall employee experience, rather than just pay and benefits. This is reflected in the continuous investments and improvements in HR practices that lead to a more positive and productive work experience. The slowing of growth in markets such as China has also meant less aggressive hiring. Employees prefer to stay at their organisation longer, so organisations must engage them actively.”

The study measures employee engagement with a Say, Stay, Strive model.

In Asia:

- For the “Say” dimension, which measures whether employees say positive things about the organisation and act as advocates, scores rose by 3 points.
- For the “Stay” dimension, which measures employees’ intent to stay at the organisation for a long time, scores also rose by 3 points.
- For the “Strive” dimension, which measures whether employees give their best efforts to help the organisation succeed, rose by 5 points.

## News From Aon

### Improving Engagement in a Time of Volatility

For organisations to succeed in a time of volatility, executives and managers must optimise the employee experience like never before.

Gitansh Malik, Regional Leader—Aon Best Employers Asia Programme, Aon Hewitt, said, “Engagement gets affected due to an employee’s lack of visibility on his career path in the organisation. This is why it’s not enough to just have performance conversations once a year. Managers must communicate a vision around how team members can transform their careers and grow in the organisation. According to the Aon Best Employers 2015 study, 67 percent of Best Employers in Singapore coach their managers on how to have effective career conversations, compared to the market average of 29 percent. As a result, Aon Best Employers in Singapore record employee engagement scores 21 points higher than the market average. This delivers direct impact on business performance, with 25 percent stronger growth in earnings and 58 percent higher growth in profits than the market average.”

This creates an urgent need for organisations to employ what Aon Hewitt calls “continuous listening”—or gathering feedback and taking action across the entire employee life cycle, from pre-recruitment to exit.

- Solicit feedback from candidates about the recruitment process regardless of whether or not the candidate gets a job offer.
- Introduce an on-boarding survey for new employees.
- Replace or augment annual engagement surveys with quarterly or monthly pulse surveys.
- Conduct exit interviews to understand why an employee is leaving, and their willingness to be recruited by the organisation again in the future.

Leaders must listen to what employees are saying about the organisation and act on the messages by having clarification conversations with employees, and making improvements based on appropriate feedback.

### About the 2016 Trends in Global Employee Engagement Study

Every year, Aon Hewitt measures employee engagement for more than 1,000 organisations around the globe. This study has been conducted using data from more than three million employee responses in 2014 and more than four million responses in 2015. The responses come from organisations with fewer than 100 employees to the most complex organisations with hundreds of thousands of employees, across more than 60 industries.

Using the Aon Hewitt Engagement Model (Say, Stay, Strive), the study garners employee responses on a series of items to determine how engaged or disengaged someone is. This study also measures 15 dimensions critical to having an effective workplace: Employee Value Proposition (EVP), Reputation, Career Opportunities, Collaboration, Diversity & Inclusion, Empowerment/Autonomy, Enabling Infrastructure, Learning & Development, Manager, Performance Management, Rewards & Recognition, Senior Leadership, Talent & Staffing, Work Fulfilment, and Work Life Balance.

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