

## Three-quarters of the British business community in Singapore actively creating new jobs according to Manpower Survey; showcasing examples of fair manpower practices

**November 11, 2020:** Members reported this week on the overview of their workforce in the British Chamber of Commerce inaugural Manpower Survey.

The findings indicate continued confidence, with three-quarters of organisations actively hiring or planning to within the next six months, creating jobs for the economy. Moving through the stages of a career journey, the survey revealed areas of importance for businesses and well-established practices of fairness and equality.

In skills development and recruitment, almost half of all organisations agreed that Singapore's Universities adequately prepared fresh graduates for realistic entry-level roles in both MNCs and SMEs, and many are active users of Government schemes. These include MyCareersFuture, SGUnited, workshops/jobs fairs, Career Matching Services, the Career Support Programme, and PCPs.

On average, two-thirds of each organisations' workforce is comprised of Singapore citizens and permanent residents. The workforce reflects the global nature of the Chamber, with almost half of each organisation's total workforce having previously worked in other countries. Respondents reported on average 12% of work pass applications rejected on the first attempt, with a 31% average success rate on appeal. Functionally, senior management and sales roles are cited as the most difficult roles to fill from within the local talent pool, with obstacles to hiring local talent focused primarily on technical skills; salary expectations, soft skills development and the anticipated length of employment term were also concerns.

Illustrating how organisations with a diverse range of employees can maintain fair practices, a video produced by the British Chamber is released today showcasing examples of fair manpower practices within the member network [<https://youtu.be/e92dRfEqQdl> – available for use by the media]. Senior representatives of the four finalists of the recent 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Business Awards' Employer of the Year category – Prudential Assurance Co Singapore, 8Build, JDX Consulting and Arcadis – are featured in interview format. The award category was ultimately won by Prudential Singapore last month, who are also the British Chamber's Official Future of Work partner. The Future of Work theme has been in place across all British Chamber activities in the topics of workforce and workplace developments since 2018.

When considering the range of skills in their talent pool, managers are confident that they have identified and are retaining their highest performers. Steps to career progression are identified and communicated by two-thirds of organisations, with over a third currently employing staff who have received at least one promotion. The length of time spent at a company is lower for local employees in comparison to the foreign workforce within companies surveyed. In all cases, organisations have a variety of learning, development and career progression opportunities available to their staff.

Per organisation, just over one third of employees who exited within the past five years cited internal factors, for example cultural fit, work-life balance, lack of opportunities, disciplinary action or redundancies. More than half such decisions were taken due to external factors such as being head-hunted, relocation, personal reasons, reaching retirement age, or the impacts of Covid. Redundancies driven by Covid had made an impact at a global level for 22% of organisations (average 9% of the workforce); 17% at a regional level (average 21% of the workforce); and 20% at a national level (8% of the workforce).

In supporting employees through to retirement, over half of organisations had communicated specific retirement ages or were flexible per employee, with the remainder defaulting to Government policies. Around 60% had succession planning and mentoring schemes in place to pass on valuable experience and knowledge to employees at the beginning of their journey.

The British Chamber of Commerce Singapore remains committed to supporting its members through their manpower requirements and the professional development of their staff, hosting a variety of activities such as the recent SGUnited information webinar delivered by Workforce Singapore, an annual opportunity for members to hold discussions with the Ministry of Manpower team, and ongoing management and skills development sessions.

Executive Director, David Kelly, commented:

*“All businesses rely on their people for success, at every size and stage in the journey, and have a responsibility to those employees as they progress through their own careers. Our Future of Work activities throughout the year focus on these important topics and build towards opportunities for members to hold dialogue directly with the Ministry of Manpower. We thank Minister Teo and her team for continuing to work with us on the ongoing sharing of updates and feedback in both directions, critical for the success of any business here in Singapore.*”

*The British Chamber of Commerce Singapore will continue to gather feedback and business updates from our network, to support the needs of businesses and to aid the Ministry with their strategy and planning going forwards, particularly as Singapore looks to recover and grow beyond the pandemic.”*

**END**

## **About the British Chamber of Commerce**

The British Chamber is an independent membership organisation with almost 4,000 members committed to strengthening the ties between the UK and Singapore. We have done so since 1954. Our goal is to deliver member value through the services we offer, that all work towards supporting our members in achieving their business objectives and aligning with our mission of Building Networks, Connecting Businesses and Creating Opportunities. Whether a company is just starting research into ASEAN by scoping the market opportunities in Singapore, have established their business and seeking growth, building connections to the UK Government, or looking for brand exposure and employee development activities, the Chamber is available to support their needs at every stage of the journey. With a full calendar of activities throughout the year including events, publications and opportunities to collaborate with our members, the Chamber team is available to help as a point of resource, introductions, networking, learning and profile-raising. Ultimately, our entire network benefits from our leading position as a strong and credible voice for our members and British businesses in Singapore and beyond. For further information visit <http://www.britcham.org.sg>.

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