

HEALTH WEALTH CAREER



# ENABLING YOUR TALENT TO THRIVE

SINGAPORE EMPLOYEE  
ENGAGEMENT INDEX

MAKE TOMORROW, TODAY



# CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary.....	3
2. Employee Engagement in Singapore .....	4
3. How do Employees feel about the Work Culture .....	7
4. Participant Profile.....	9



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Singapore is a country at the forefront of digital transformation. Research frequently cites the country's well developed digital infrastructure and innovative economic incentives as amongst the most progressive in the world. Indeed, in a recent report from the Economist Intelligence Unit, Singapore ranks joint first with Australia and Sweden in Global Technological Readiness Rankings – ahead of countries like the USA, UK and China.

Yet something still seems to be missing. Productivity continues to be a key area of concern for many businesses and innovation output lags behind other leading economies. For Singapore to realise the true potential of its investments in technology and infrastructure then people must play an important role. In short, it must have employees who are engaged in the transformation journey. People who find their work a place where they can truly Thrive.

The Singapore government has recognized this. In the launch of its industry manpower plan for HR, the Ministry of Manpower noted that “for continued, sustainable growth, our businesses and workforce have to become more agile and relevant. Organisations that value people as “human capital” and invest in their development will be better-positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities.”

This year, we have refreshed and simplified our perspective on employee engagement in Singapore based on the responses of 45,600 employees over the last five years. In this analysis we look to identify

some of the key issues and challenges that people experience at work in Singapore, as well as the strengths they see. Our goal is to help you see some of the unifying opportunities across Singapore which can be used to further strengthen the competitiveness of businesses and the economy. In the following pages you will find insights into three key messages:

- First, employees are notably less enthusiastic about their employers relative to regional and global peers.
- Second, many people experience the culture of their organization as limiting. Many feel unable to speak their mind openly and struggle to get decisions made in a timely fashion. Employees are also more likely to report feeling overworked, hindering innovation and confidence in the future.
- Last, in spite of the above concerns, many employees in Singapore say they feel appropriately involved in decisions that impact their work and, on the whole, are proud to work for their company.

While the focus on strategy and structure in Singapore has served leaders well thus far, there is now a need to place more emphasis on the stewardship of the social elements in companies. We see this data as an urgent call for leaders in Singapore to shift their focus and lift their capability to be more effective “social architects” and cultural champions.

We hope you find this year's report insightful.

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**PETA LATIMER**  
CEO, Mercer Singapore

**LEWIS GARRARD**  
Engagement Practice Leader  
Growth Markets Region

# WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

At Mercer, we assess employee engagement by measuring the level of pride, motivation and commitment employees have towards their organizations. In essence, engagement is a measure of how much energy people feel at work and the extent to which they feel passionate about what the organization stands for. Our definition covers three aspects:



## COMMITTED

Wanting to stay with the organization and feeling passionate about its mission



## CONTRIBUTING

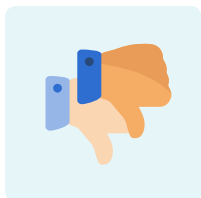
Motivated to help the organization succeed



## CAPTIVATED

Feeling energized and looking forward to coming to work

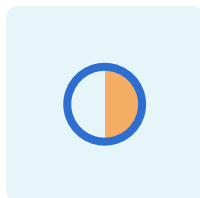
In this report, the data represents the average percentage of favourable responses. A favourable response is when employees strongly agree or agree on a five-point Likert scale:



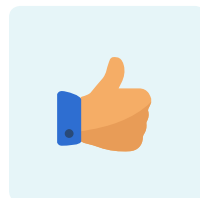
STRONGLY  
DISAGREE



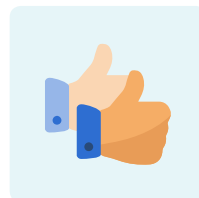
DISAGREE



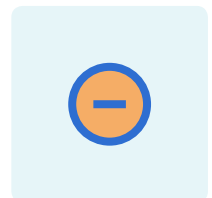
NEITHER AGREE  
NOR DISAGREE



AGREE



STRONGLY  
AGREE

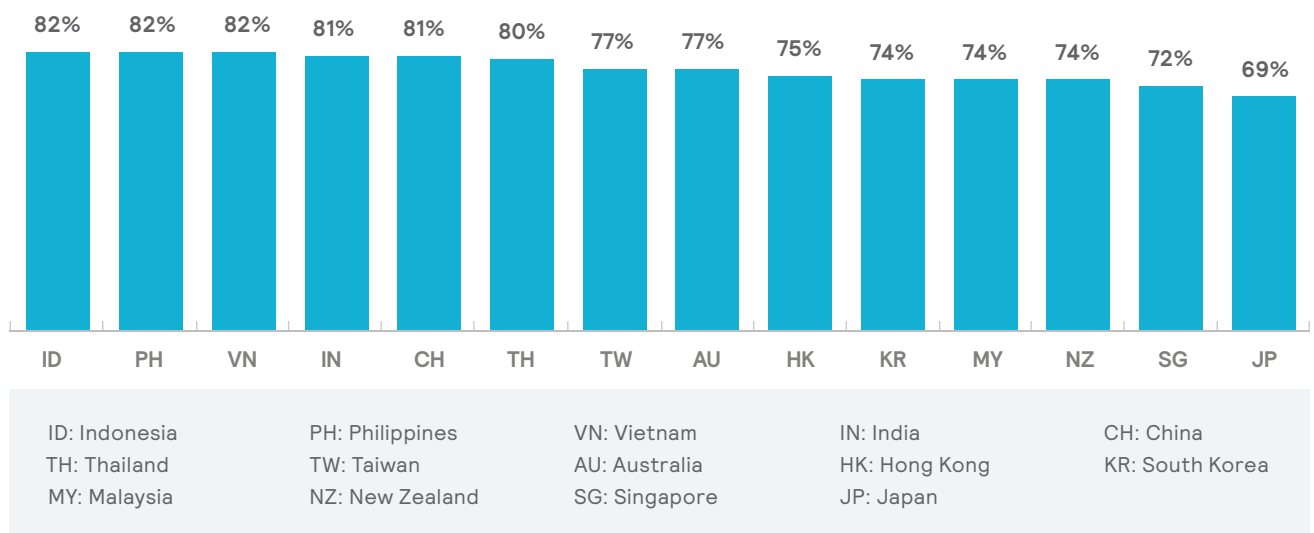


DON'T KNOW/  
NOT APPLICABLE

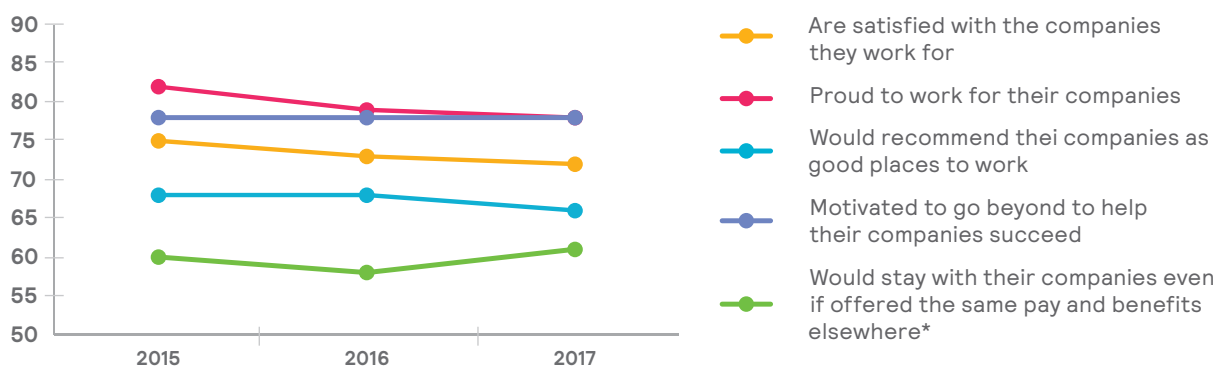
Although engaged employees are favorable about our engagement survey items, we often see that some employees in this group are more engaged than others. Delving deeper, we describe employees who strongly agree to our engagement questions as enthusiastic about work. We describe employees who agree to our engagement questions as onboard and happy to participate in the organization agenda.

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN SINGAPORE

Our analysis reveals that 72% of employees in Singapore are somewhat engaged at work\*. While some of the data seems reassuring Singapore is actually ranked almost bottom when compared to counterparts in the Asia Pacific region.



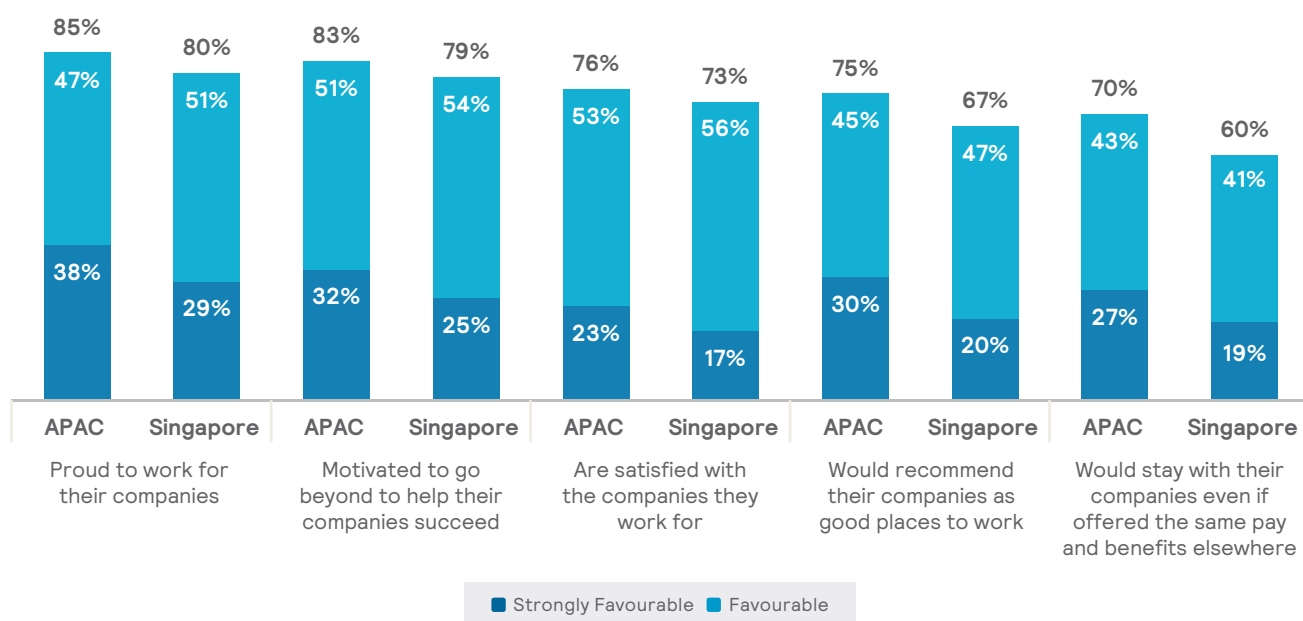
Looking at engagement trends over the last three years\*\*, it is no surprise that Singapore has fallen behind in the region. As the data suggests, Singapore continues to struggle with declining engagement levels. Although there is a 3 point increase in employees' intention to stay with their employers, they are critical about questions related to their motivation, pride, and satisfaction. In particular, employees in Singapore are less positive about recommending their companies as good places to work.



\* This year we have updated our engagement methodology to include an additional question (I would choose to stay with my Company even if offered the same pay and benefits elsewhere) to measure intention to stay.

\*\* The three years trend data as shown in the second figure is derived from an individual year on year data. Apart from this figure, all data presented in this report are five years norm data; an aggregate of company responses from multiple surveys over the last 5 years (2013 – 2017).

A deep dive into employees' favourable responses on the engagement questions further reveal that among those who are engaged, only a small percentage of employees in Singapore are reportedly enthusiastic about their organization. This is reflected in the data below where there is a stark difference in strongly favourable responses between employees in the APAC region and Singapore. Further information on the comparisons of regional and global data can be found in the Appendix section of this report.



# HOW DO EMPLOYEES IN SINGAPORE FEEL ABOUT THEIR JOB?



73%

Involved in decisions that affect their work



78%

Makes good use of their skills and abilities



76%

Provides them a sense of personal accomplishment

As noted in our recent 2018 Global Talent Trends Report, employees crave for a meaningful work experience. They want to work with a purpose that resonates with their personal values. This implies that the future of work lies in empowering individuals. In general, our data reveals that employees in Singapore are somewhat optimistic about their job. Seven out of 10 employees feel empowered to make decisions. They also feel that they are able to put their skills and abilities to good use, which correlates with having a sense of personal accomplishment.

## THE EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION



70%

Have opportunity to continually learn and grow



63%

Feel their career goals can be met



69%

Feel the amount of work expected of them is reasonable



54%

Believe they are compensated fairly for what they do

Besides craving for purposeful work, employees are also seeking to learn and grow. Our findings reveal that one third of employees are uncertain about their opportunity for growth. They are also less positive about their workload as compared to their peers in the APAC region. In today's era, while pay and benefits are important, leaders must also recognize the need to invest in talent and help people meet their career goals. By doing so, these thriving employees are five times more likely to believe that they are paid fairly and competitively.

# THE FUTURE OF WORK



**77%**

They can be innovative in their job



**70%**

Company does a good job communicating to employees on matters that affects them



**78%**

Confident in the future of their company



**71%**

Senior leadership provides them a clear picture of the direction in which the company is headed



The future of work is changing. As technology integrates into the work environment at an unprecedented rate, employers are forced to re-think how they could prepare their workforce for the future. In Singapore, many employees are confident about their organization's plan to succeed. Notably, eight out of 10 employees feel they can be innovative in their job. In addition, they also feel there is clarity on their organization direction and on matters that affect them. This implies the need for organizations to continue to employ people-planning strategies that focus on disruption and innovation, and help employees visualize the potential for a different future.

## HOW DO EMPLOYEES FEEL ABOUT THE WORK CULTURE?



**78%**

Experience a spirit of cooperation and teamwork within work unit



**62%**

Feel decisions get made without undue delay



**61%**

Feel different parts of the company cooperate with each other in the interest of high quality performance



**66%**

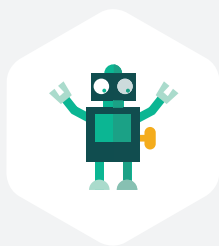
Can express their ideas / views without fear of negative consequences



The environment organizations provide for people at work can impact the quality and efficiency of job performance. Although 80% of employees are proud to work for their companies, approximately 40% feel less positive about the speed at which decisions are made. A closer review reveals that Singapore falls 8 points below the rest of countries in the APAC region. Interestingly although 8 in 10 employees experience a sense of camaraderie within their work unit, collaboration between different parts of the company seems a challenge for many.

# PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Analysis from this report is derived from the Mercer database of responses from employees based in Singapore. We surveyed 60 companies in Singapore with more than 45,600 employees working for a variety of global and local multinationals across the following sectors:



**HIGH TECH**



**ENERGY**



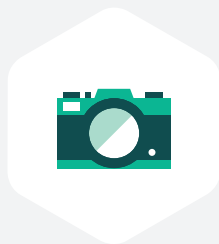
**CONSULTING &  
PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICES**



**MANUFACTURING**



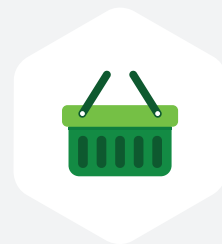
**LIFE SCIENCES**



**MEDIA**



**FINANCIAL  
SERVICES**



**RETAILERS**



**CONSUMER  
PRODUCTS**



**HOSPITALITY**

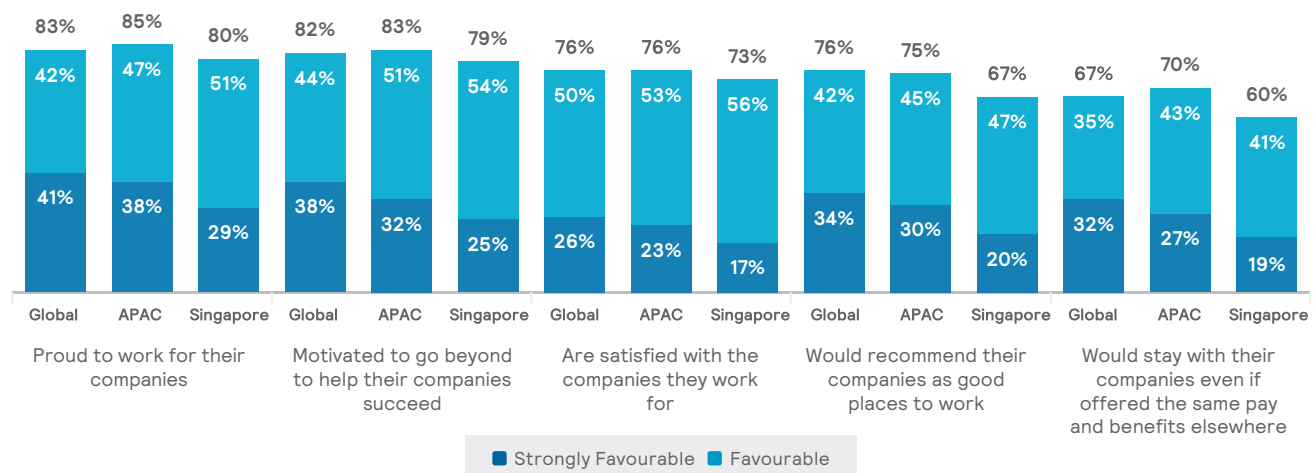


**OTHERS**

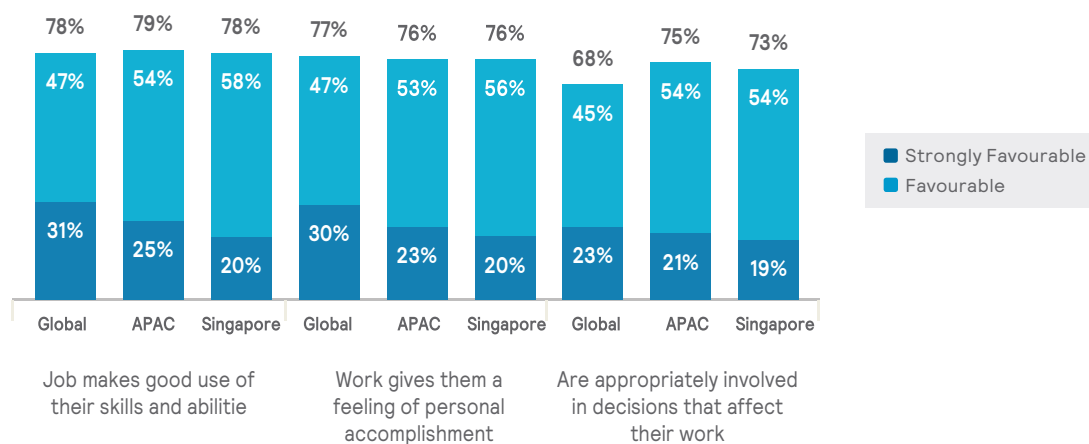
These responses are collected as part of employee census programs that measure employee engagement along with other strategic areas that impact the overall business performance. Unless stated otherwise, the data presented in this report is an aggregate of company responses from multiple surveys over the last 5 years (2013 – 2017). Hence, comparison of data from past year's index report should be approached with the knowledge that scores in each specific year are moving averages of data over the last 5 years.

# APPENDIX

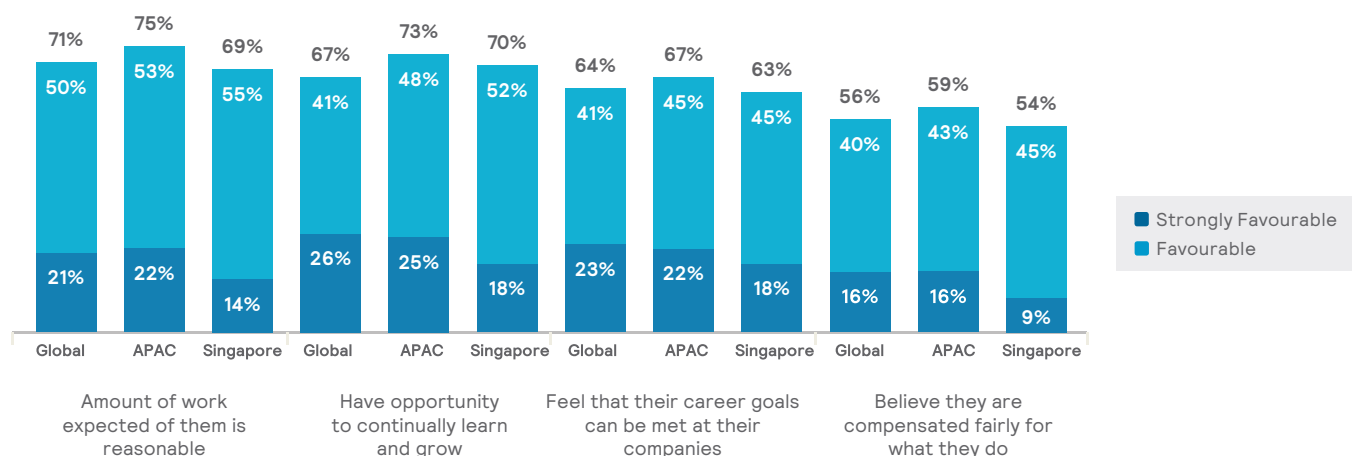
## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



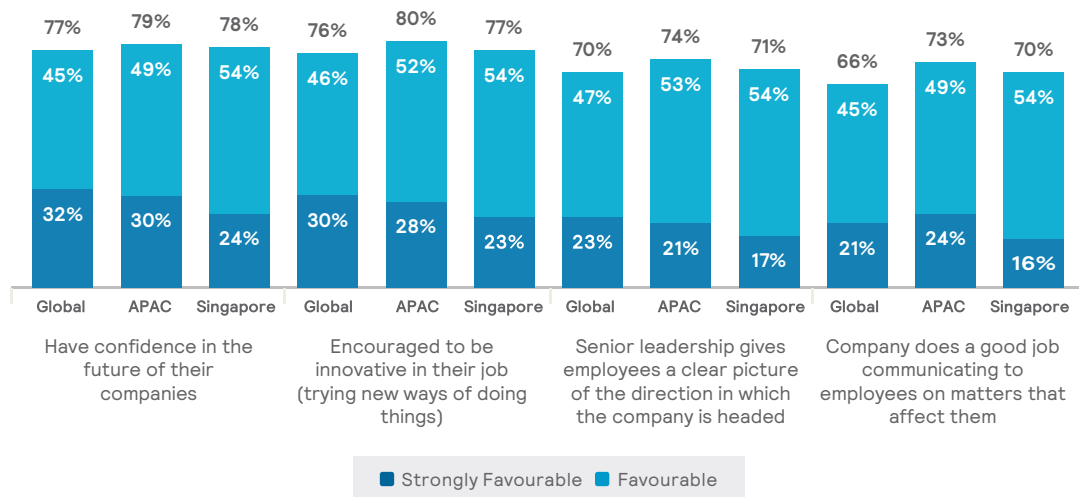
## HOW DO EMPLOYEES IN SINGAPORE FEEL ABOUT THEIR JOB?



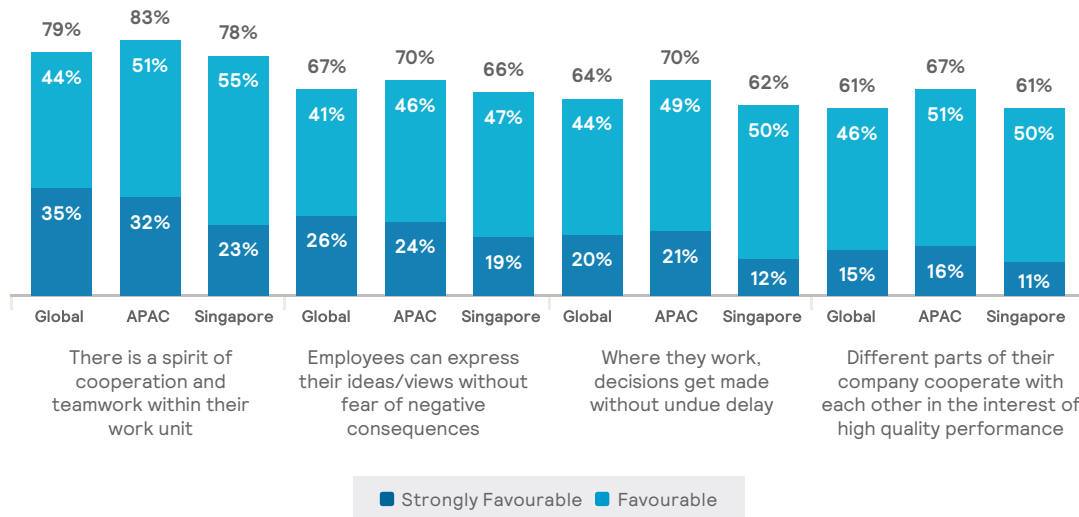
## THE EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION



## THE FUTURE OF WORK



## HOW DO EMPLOYEES FEEL ABOUT THEIR WORK CULTURE



**MERCER (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD.**

8 Marina View #09-08

Asia Square Tower 1

Singapore 018960

[www.asean.mercer.com](http://www.asean.mercer.com)

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