

SINGAPORE EMPLOYERS SHOULD MANAGE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT WORKPLACES MORE PROACTIVELY, ACCORDING TO JOINT REPORT BY SNEF & KINCENTRIC

- Seven out of 10 Singapore-based employers have not introduced DE&I policies, citing challenges such as culture, compliance, and managerial ineffectiveness. By comparison, 62% of them have considered DE&I as a factor for their hiring and promotion processes.
- Most employers surveyed recognised the positive impact of DE&I on Company Culture (71%) and Employee Engagement (55%).
- Funding support and other resources are available for employers who are keen to improve on workplace integration

Singapore, 21 September 2021 – The latest report, “The Maturity of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Practices in Singapore Based Firms” by Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) and Kincentric, a Spencer Stuart Company sheds light on how Singapore employers fare when it comes to managing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) at workplaces. The report surveyed 186 Singapore-based employers spanning 19 sectors¹ in 2021. Findings indicate that despite growing awareness, 70% of employers have yet to instate a formal approach towards DE&I. However, most companies believe in the importance for DE&I and have been positively impacted through areas such as Company Culture (71%) and Employee Engagement (55%) amongst others. While employers do not have a formal approach to DE&I, 62% of such employers have made a head start towards incorporating DE&I as a factor of their hiring and promotion processes.

Challenges facing Singapore-based firms

One-fourth of employers surveyed found it challenging to implement DE&I due to the lack of available data such as gender pay gap, inequality in career progression, age-based performance, and barriers to participation in work for those with disabilities or caring responsibilities. The remaining firms were hindered by the inability to embed DE&I into organisational values, people management and employee behaviour (24%), and at times, the ineffectiveness of line managers when managing their teams in a non-discriminatory manner (22%). Standalone events such as International Women’s Day celebrations are viewed as less effective (11%), as most companies have yet to implement DE&I policies and do not engage their staff over a long term.

Andrew How, Managing Partner at Kincentric added, “Today, business leaders have come to realise that DE&I is the need of the hour as firms set foot in the post-pandemic world. To set direction and demonstrate commitment, it is crucial to lead by example. Having advised senior leaders, we have observed that many firms struggle in making employees feel emotionally safe, understood, and

¹ Industry composition of Singapore-based companies surveyed: Modern Services (i.e., Professional services + Finance + ICT)- 20%; Manufacturing (i.e., Electronics + Chemical + General Manufacturing + Maritime + Energy & Utilities + Metal & Precision Engineering) - 19%; Social & Community Services - 19%

empowered. Therefore, the first step to remedying the situation is to conduct an honest, internal assessment of the organisation's current situation using a holistic, evidence-based approach. It is a much-needed reality check to assess where the gaps are. Following which, they need to enact new ways of leading which involves creating active, intentional efforts with coaching, developmental journeys, tools and resources to improve one's ability to identify and mitigate any unconscious bias."

DE&I should rank high on boardroom agenda

According to Kincentric, there is a significant gap between the perception of diversity and inclusion, and the reality within the organisation². To overcome this, DE&I pulse surveys and focus groups can help senior leaders track sentiments and progress on DE&I efforts and goals. Kincentric, works with various corporates to deliver data-driven DE&I solutions that can be embedded into organisational cultures and leadership behaviours. The ultimate objective is to enhance the employee experience and align leadership to drive real, lasting sustainable change.

Resources and funding available for firms

Employers are urged to proactively manage DE&I at the workplaces and one resource that they can tap on is the [OneWorkplace.sg](https://www.oneworkplace.sg) initiative, managed by SNEF, which supports employers' efforts to foster workplace integration.

Firms in Singapore can apply for the Community Integration Fund (CIF) which provides co-funding of up to 80% of the total qualifying costs (i.e., costs that are eligible for CIF support), capped at \$100 per person or \$30,000, whichever is lower. Firms can further benefit from briefings, workshops and WSQ courses, conducted by SNEF, to better understand, appreciate and build DE&I at the workplace.

Mr Sim Gim Guan, Executive Director of SNEF said, "While the vast majority of Singapore employers are fair, they have yet to harness the full potential of a diverse workforce and how DE&I can help them to cast their net wider to attract talent. By managing DE&I better, employers can strengthen workplace relations, collaboration, and innovation. Building on workplace fairness, employers can develop inclusive workplace policies and practices that will attract and retain the best talent."

The full report will be published in October 2021.

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² Kincentric, August 2021. [The New DE&I Playbook](#)—5 Key Actions to Create Sustained, Systemic Culture Change

About Singapore National Employers Federation

The Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) is a trade union of employers. Our mission is to advance tripartism and enhance labour market flexibility to enable employers to implement responsible employment practices for sustainable growth. SNEF has a membership of over 3,300 companies with a combined workforce of over 800,000. For more information, please visit www.snef.org.sg.

About Kincentric

Kincentric, a Spencer Stuart company, helps organizations unlock the power of people and teams to ignite change and drive better business results. With decades of experience and specialist expertise in areas such as culture; employee engagement; leadership assessment and development; HR and talent advisory; and diversity, equity and inclusion, we use data-driven insights to architect solutions that add value, enhance agility and increase organizational effectiveness. For more information, visit kincentric.com.