

Press release
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Singapore among the world's most challenging countries to train and hire staff to assist with new technologies

- 93% of Singaporean business leaders say it will be challenging to train staff on new technology – above the APAC (88%) and global (78%) averages.
- 92% find it difficult to recruit talent with appropriate IT skills – the highest rate globally.
- 73% have increased staff training budgets – above the 66% recorded across APAC and 63% globally.

Singapore, 13 September 2019 – New technologies are rapidly changing workplace dynamics around the globe, however, independent research by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) shows that Singaporean employers find it significantly more challenging to train and hire staff to implement new technologies compared to their global peers.

“The rate of Singapore’s digital transformation is faster than that of their global peers. While this will be of great benefit to Singapore in the long term, cementing their position as a competitive digital leader globally, our research suggests that it may have outpaced the workforces ability to adapt to the new technologies which places additional pressure on individual organizations to bridge this skills gap in the short term,” says **Matthieu Imbert-Bouchard, Managing Director of Robert Half Singapore**.

“While technology is the driver behind business transformation, it is human capital that will determine its success, highlighting the need for Singaporean business leaders to prioritise change management, upskilling and reskilling their existing workforce, and recruiting the right talent to adapt to new technology.”

Training is not without challenges

While business leaders clearly understand the importance of training to assist with adapting and implementing new technologies within their organisations, many think their efforts could be hampered by unavoidable challenges. Globally, almost eight in 10 (78%) business leaders predict it will be challenging to train staff on new technologies. This is especially the case in Singapore, where 93% of Singaporean managers anticipate challenges in upskilling staff to adapt to new technology – the second highest rate across the 13 countries surveyed, second only to the United Arab Emirates (94%).

The research shows that the three biggest barriers Singaporean leaders face to adapting their team to new technologies are difficulty integrating with legacy systems and processes (39%), the effort or cost to implement new technologies being greater than the benefits (38%), and a belief that the technologies are unproved (36%).

Matthieu Imbert-Bouchard, Managing Director of Robert Half Singapore says: *“Globally, the workplace dynamic is shifting towards a more technology-enabled future. In order to stay competitive, companies are under increasing pressure to source, recruit and nurture talent that can quickly adapt to new technology and drive organisational change in the face of new opportunities. To survive into the future, employees must be agile and responsive to new technologies for businesses to be capable of taking full advantage of its benefits.”*

Methods to help staff learn about new technologies

Singapore is amongst the most globally proactive towards professional development to help their staff learn about new technologies. More than seven in 10 (73%) Singaporean companies have increased their staff training budgets, compared to 65% across APAC, and 64% globally.

With increased budgets, Singaporean companies have already implemented a variety of training options to help staff adapt to new technology.

- 60% in-person training through seminars and courses
- 42% mentoring
- 38% online courses
- 38% reimbursing employee's professional certification costs

Business leaders in Singapore can take advantage of training initiatives and support available through the SkillsFuture movement, which comprises a suite of initiatives to prepare Singaporeans and enterprises for the digital economy. To date, 4,500 individuals and 1,100 companies have benefitted from the work-study program since the program – SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Program (ELP), was launched in 2015¹.

Matthieu Imbert-Bouchard, Managing Director of Robert Half Singapore said: *“In a competitive, technology-driven market, Singaporean companies need to build teams who can readily adapt to, and leverage, new technology. Investing in staff training plays a key role, and it is rewarding to see strong take-up of the initiatives offered through SkillsFuture.”*

The right talent, key in a digitised workplace

Aside from training existing teams, Singaporean companies are also looking at bringing in the necessary skills, though not without challenges. More than nine out of ten (92%) Singaporean business leaders believe it is challenging to source professionals skilled in the new technologies their company will be implementing. This is the highest rate globally, and well above the APAC average of 80% and global average of 71%.

In order to build more agile workforces that are responsive to the benefits of new technology, Singaporean business leaders are endorsing a flexible staffing model which includes a mix of permanent employees alongside interim and contract professionals who provide support and specialised skills on an as-needed basis. 81% of Singaporean business leaders agree that a combined staffing model is the most successful structure to implement digital transformation, compared to only 69% of their global peers.

“Flexible staffing allows Singaporean companies to quickly onboard the most suitable contacting talent to manage critical projects and share their skills with existing teams. In tandem with a robust professional development program, this can support company goals to build the skilled workforce needed to maximise the opportunities offered by evolving technologies,” **Matthieu Imbert-Bouchard** concluded.

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Notes to editors

About the research

¹ <https://www.skillsfuture.sg/NewsAndUpdates/DetailPage/92873470-6f90-47cf-858b-169c8dfb84d8>

The annual study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted in January 2019 by an independent research firm, surveying 6075 business leaders in 13 countries worldwide: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and the UK. This survey is part of an international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy. Founded in 1948, the company has more than 300 offices worldwide providing interim management, temporary and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services and technology professionals in Singapore. More information on roberthalf.com.sg.

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