

Press release
June 2017

Majority of Singapore bosses actively combatting workplace stress

- 78% of Singaporean CFOs believe the stress levels of their staff will increase over the next three years.
- The top three causes of rising stress levels are increased workloads (56%), increased business expectations (54%) and shorter deadlines (40%).
- 94% are taking measures to reduce stress in their workspace.

Singapore, 20 June 2017 – Despite already being a highly competitive business environment with long working hours, independent research commissioned by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) has found 78% of Singaporean CFOs expect stress levels of their finance staff to rise over the next three years.

When asked what the main causes of growing stress levels are in the workplace, Singaporean CFOs cite increased workloads (56%), increased business expectations (54%), shorter deadlines (40%) and a competitive marketplace (38%).

Matthieu Imbert-Bouchard, Managing Director of Robert Half Singapore said: *“Singapore has a global reputation for business excellence, with finance professionals working in a highly competitive marketplace. Yet long working hours, higher workloads combined with shorter deadlines and increased business expectations can cause stress levels to rise among Singapore’s workforce. It’s vital for the city-state’s bosses to not only recognise growing stress levels within their workspaces, but to actively address it.”*

“Stress is a drain not only on an employee’s wellbeing but also on the organisation. Employees who are burned out or chronically frustrated and stressed are more prone to illness and absenteeism, and generally show signs of decreased morale which all negatively impact business productivity – hence company success.”

In an attempt to effectively manage workplace stress, the overwhelming majority (94%) of Singaporean CFOs are taking measures specifically designed to reduce stress in the workspace. More than half (55%) are respectively encouraging staff to give regular feedback to management and offering flexible working hours or remote work opportunities. Just over half (51%) are redesigning the office space to facilitate better productivity and promote a more efficient working environment and more than four in 10 (42%) are hosting regular social team activities.

“Singaporean companies are proactively implementing a combination of measures in order to reduce workplace stress, ranging from adjusting their infrastructure, amending their workplace culture by increasingly allowing flexible work schedules and adjusting their staffing policies so temporary staff can assist existing employees during hectic periods on the business calendar. Employers understand the importance of employee wellbeing as these measures gradually becoming more common practice in Singaporean organisations.”

“By combatting workplace stress, companies can foster an engaging and productive workplace culture, which can positively affect the company’s bottom line,” **Matthieu Imbert-Bouchard** concluded.

Singaporean CFOs were asked: “What measures has your company taken to reduce stress in the workplace?”

Flexible working hours or remote work opportunities	55%
Regular opportunities to provide feedback to management	55%
Redesign office space to facilitate productivity and efficient working	51%
Regular social team activities (corporate events, birthdays, holiday parties, etc.)	43%
Wellness schemes	27%
Hired temporary professionals to alleviate workloads	18%
The company has not taken measures specifically designed to reduce stress levels in the company	6%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 160 Singaporean CFOs – multiple answers allowed.

8 steps for employers to reduce or prevent workplace stress

- 1. Motivate and reward employees:** Don’t hold back on praise for a job well done. Feeling appreciated in the workplace can further motivate staff which in turn can reduce workload pressure.
- 2. Listen to employees:** Make sure there are open lines of communication for staff to discuss what is causing them stress, then deliberate on how to reduce workplace stress and implement action plans for improvement so that stressful situations can be managed better.
- 3. Address issues while they’re fresh:** Workplace conflicts and stressful situations rarely go away on their own. Reach out to co-workers who may be demonstrating signs of stress and tension, and work through the issues together.
- 4. Be proactive with planning:** Map out day-to-day operations and new initiatives to let employees anticipate challenges and organise their workflow more efficiently so potential stressful situations can be avoided.
- 5. Assess training and technology needs:** Look for changes that could make internal processes more efficient, such as automating manual procedures or upgrading computers. Spending less time on manual processes and more time on value-adding projects can make the job more rewarding.
- 6. Revisit your corporate culture:** Employees should feel respected and rewarded for their work. Consider if your corporate culture focuses on commitment to success and employee wellbeing, or if it promotes a culture of embedded pressure and stress.
- 7. Take a break:** Consider thanking your team with a few stress-reducing perks, like a professional neck massage at the desk.
- 8. Demonstrate a commitment to work-life balance:** Create work-life balance opportunities by embracing a variety of options such as flexible work hours and remote work opportunities.

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Notes to editors

About the research

The annual study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted in January 2017 by an independent research firm, surveying 100 Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) in the financial services industry in Singapore. This survey is part of the 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 over 325 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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[5 unexpected sources of work stress and how to beat them](#)

Beyond a micromanaging boss and looming deadlines, there are many subtle yet insidious contributors of work stress. Eliminating work stress completely may not be possible but pinning down the sneaky contributors of stress and kicking them to the curb can improve your day and maximise your work performance. Read more here if you can identify with these issues, and find out how you can reduce stress at your work place.



[Flexible working hours: 7 benefits your business is missing out on](#)

Allowing your employees to work from home might not be such a bad idea. Do you prefer to have all your employees sat at their desks where you can micro-manage them or are you a macro-manager with a more relaxed management style? If your company remains committed to employees working at their desk, you could be missing out on several business benefits. Read more here.

For more information

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