



PRESS RELEASE

Local HR Professionals make greater impact on business results when they are effective in key HR competencies: Study

First nationally commissioned study in Singapore shows higher expectations of local HR professionals vis-à-vis global peers

Singapore, 17 September 2009 – The first nationally commissioned study of its kind in Singapore to benchmark the competency standards of local HR professionals against that of their global counterparts, shows that the impact of local HR professionals on business results is noticeably greater compared to their global peers.

2. Commissioned by Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM), The RBL Group, a leading leadership and human resource consultancy firm, embarked on a study to benchmark local HR professionals' impact on business results against their global counterparts, as well as to examine the competencies and capabilities of local HR practitioners that create the most value for business results.

3. More than 250 HR professionals and over a thousand of their business partners from 50 companies based in Singapore were involved in the study. The participating companies represent a broad spectrum of the Singapore economy – from manufacturing, professional services, logistics and healthcare to finance and the public sector.

4. The HR Competency Study is one of the three Asia-centric research findings that will be shared at the Singapore Human Capital Summit 2009. The Summit will be held on 29 to 30 September 2009 at Raffles City Convention Centre.

5. Over the last 20 years, The RBL Group and the University of Michigan have conducted the largest ongoing study of the competencies of HR professionals across the world with a database of more than 45,000 people from North and Latin America, Europe, Australia, China and India. In the most recent round of their global research, The RBL Group found that six categories or factors constitute the competencies of HR professionals:

1. Credible Activist,
2. Culture and Change Steward,
3. Talent Manager / Organisational Designer,
4. Strategy Architect,
5. Operational Executor and
6. Business Ally.

More information on the six categories of the competencies of HR professionals can be found in [Annex A](#).

Preliminary Study Findings

6. The preliminary findings of the Singapore study revealed that while local HR professionals do the best job at being a credible activist, they need to strengthen the rest of the competencies, especially the *Business Ally* competency, in order to add greater value to business results. These findings are similar to the global results.

7. Another finding showed that the impact local HR professionals can have on business results and their personal performance is noticeably greater than the impact of their global HR counterparts (by up to 12 per cent) when they can harness these competencies effectively. This is despite the finding that they are rated consistently lower in all categories of HR competencies compared to global findings. This may indicate that the expectations on local HR professionals by their business partners are greater than elsewhere in the world - their line management colleagues expect them to be better and to contribute even more than their global counterparts.

8. Commenting on the implications of the findings, Professor Dave Ulrich, Partner and Co-founder of The RBL Group, said: "With a higher expectation by their line management colleagues, HR professionals in Singapore need to more effectively translate their business knowledge to strategy formulation and implementation for business success."

9. Professor Wayne Brockbank, Partner of The RBL Group and principal investigator for this study, added: "Singapore HR practitioners also need to have greater knowledge and skills at aligning their HR activities to create effective business cultures and to be a more effective change management agent. Essentially, they need to understand their roles and agendas through which they create more customer-focused organisations. The internal clients of Singapore HR professionals expect them to add greater value. The HR community in Singapore has a mandate to develop greater knowledge and skills that enable them to add greater value to the business."

10. Commenting on the implications of the research findings on organisations in Singapore and local HR professionals, Mr Leo Yip, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Manpower, said, "This first-ever such study is significant and will go a long way. Its findings and recommendations by the researchers uncover the fact that organisations in Singapore are recognising HR's role as a strategic partner, while uncovering key HR competencies that matters most to their organisations. To help HR professionals prioritise their efforts to become stronger business allies, MOM and WDA are putting together some key national initiatives to make Singapore the HR Hub for Asia."

Key National Initiatives

11. The MOM and Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) have introduced a range of initiatives to enhance the capability and competencies of local HR professionals. These include the Human Resource Workforce Skills Qualifications (HR WSQ) and the Leadership and People Management Workforce Skills Qualifications (LPM WSQ), which are national skills standards against which HR and leadership capabilities can be benchmarked, with training conducted through Human Capital (Singapore) Pte Ltd, the WDA-appointed HR CET centre.

12. To bring cutting edge knowledge, thinking and practice in the leadership development and HR fields to local business and HR leaders, Singapore has also started the Distinguished HR Visitors Programme (DHRVP) to invite key thought leaders from around the world to Singapore to share their expertise. The Executive Roundtable created a platform which brought together global and regional CEOs, key thought leaders and HR practitioners to deep dive and deliberate into the talent and human capital challenges and solutions of managing in Asia. Other initiatives include the Singapore Human Capital Summit and the Asian Human Capital Award. Details of these initiatives can be found at [Annex B](#).

About Ministry of Manpower

The Ministry of Manpower aspires to develop a globally competitive workforce and a great workplace, for a cohesive society and a secure economic future for all Singaporeans. For more information, please visit www.mom.gov.sg

About Singapore Workforce Development Agency

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) seeks to enhance the employability and competitiveness of our workforce to meet the changing needs of Singapore's economy. Working with industry, unions, employers, economic agencies, professional associations and training organisations, the agency's efforts are targeted at supporting industry growth by building a pipeline of workers through training and skills upgrading, and raising industry standards through enhancing manpower capabilities. For more information, please visit www.wda.gov.sg

About The Singapore Human Capital Summit 2009

The Singapore Human Capital Summit 2009 is a premier conference on managing and developing human capital, organised for Asia, in Asia. Organized by the Ministry of Manpower and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, the Summit brings together over 30 outstanding global CEOs and international industry experts and thought leaders to share their experience, insights and best practices.

For information on the Summit's programme and full line-up of speakers, please visit www.singaporehcs Summit.com

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Factsheet on HR Competency Study

The HR Competency Study aims to answer these critical questions:

- 1) How effective are HR professionals in Singapore at using the competencies of their profession?
- 2) Which competencies have greatest impact on individual performance and business results for Singapore companies?
- 3) How do Singapore HR professionals perform relative to HR professionals from around the world?

Over the last 20 years, The RBL Group has conducted the largest ongoing study of the competencies of HR professionals around the world with a database of more than 45,000 participants from North and Latin America, Europe, Australia, China, and India. The findings in Singapore will contribute to that global data.

Research Methodology

The study employs a 360 degree research methodology. Through a rigorous survey, a HR professional evaluates him or herself and is further evaluated by four to six HR or line management associates.

In the most recent round of their global research, the researchers found six categories or factors that constitute the competencies of HR professionals:

- **Credible Activist** – HR professionals must get things done. They must do what they say they will do and they must do so with integrity. They should take strong positions that challenge assumptions and should effectively communicate those positions.
- **Strategy Architect** – HR professionals help formulate long-term business strategies and translate them into short term initiatives. They ensure that customer logic is fully disseminated throughout the organisation and is leveraged as the basis of internal integration and coordination.
- **Culture and Change Steward** – HR professionals help conceptualise and frame the business culture that organisations must have to outperform their competition or to achieve their pre-stated goals. They then articulate, and shape their organisations' desired cultures through effective HR and leadership practices. They are also capable at designing and managing large scale change efforts.
- **Talent Manager / Organisational Designer** – HR professionals leverage the full toolkit of recruitment, promotions, transfers, performance management, reward systems, training and development to create high performing talent. They are also able to effectively leverage organisation design to create and sustain the key capabilities that are required for business success. They ensure that the competency categories of Strategy Architect, Culture and Change Steward and Talent Manager / Organisational Design are fully aligned with each other for optimal business outcomes.

- **Operational Executor** – HR professionals design information systems through which HR practices are efficiently and flexibly managed. They also draft and implement HR policies that engage and direct employees.
- **Business Ally** – HR professionals should understand the business context and how their organisation succeeds and / or makes money. They know the parts of the business and how the parts must work together.

Factsheet on Government Initiatives to raise HR competencies

Singapore takes a two-pronged approach to raise HR competencies:

- a) Raise capabilities to leverage human capital for business competitiveness; and
- b) Offer platforms for strategic exchanges of leading ideas and practices in human capital management and leadership development.

Raise capabilities to leverage human capital for business competitiveness

HR WSQ and LPM WSQ

Developed by WDA, together with leading industry partners, the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system now includes Leadership and People Management as well as Human Resource Development which are aimed at improving the people management skills in organisations and raising capabilities of HR practitioners.

CET Centre for HR

More HR professionals and line managers can have access to quality HR WSQ training through the CET Centre for HR. Human Capital (Singapore) Pte Ltd was appointed by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to augment training capacity in this area.

Platforms for strategic exchanges of leading ideas and practices

The Distinguished HR Visitors Programme (DHRVP)

DHRVP brings to Singapore global HR and leadership experts to share insights on global developments and emerging trends in these fields, as well as the latest thinking and practice from around the world. Visitors to-date include:

- i) Peter Cappelli, Professor of Management, Director for the Center for Human Resources, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania;
- ii) Patrick Wright, Professor of Human Resource Studies, Director of the Center for Advanced HR Studies, Cornell University;
- iii) Lynda Gratton, Professor of Management Practice, London Business School;
- iv) Dave Ulrich, Partner and Co-founder of The RBL Group, Professor of Business, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan;
- v) Jeffrey Pfeffer, Thomas D. Dee II Professor of Organizational Behaviour, Stanford University Graduate School of Business;
- vi) John Boudreau, Professor, Management and Organization, Marshall School of Business and Research Director, Center for Effective Organizations, University of Southern California

Executive Roundtable

The roundtable is a platform to bring together thought and practice leaders from academia, business and professional services to:

- a) Identify human capital management and leadership challenges;
- b) Articulate strategies to address these challenges, and define the role of leadership in building sustainable success in business; and
- c) Discuss the best approaches to maximise value from human capital and the implications of building an effective human capital strategy for business success.

The highlights of the discussions are consolidated and made available for public access to help generate new knowledge and ideas for business leaders operating in Asia. The key concerns highlighted in the discussions will also serve as useful leads for further research to develop practical solutions to help businesses better respond to the emerging challenges.

Singapore Human Capital Summit

Organised by MOM and the WDA, the Singapore Human Capital Summit is an annual strategic platform that brings together thought and practice leaders from around the world to discuss the human capital challenges in Asia and the strategic responses for business success.

Asian Human Capital Award

The Asian Human Capital Award recognises innovative and impactful people practices adopted by organisations in Asia. Conferred by MOM, INSEAD and CNBC Asia, the award will be a key annual platform to showcase best people practices and help shape effective strategies and solutions for human capital challenges in Asia.