



NATIONAL WORKPLACE HAPPINESS SURVEY (NWHS) 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Workplace Happiness Survey (NWHS) project is an idea jointly conceived and organised by Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) and Align Group, supported by Magnet, in order to obtain a national benchmark on Workplace Happiness using a scientific measurement. SHRI represents the strong interest of HR professionals in Singapore to create a better workplace for employees, while Align Group is a people consulting firm advocating Workplace Happiness as a sustainable strategy for high-performance organisations. All parties share a common vision in promoting a happier workplace.

NWHS explores what potentially makes an employee happy at work, and highlights the existing conditions that support or work against employee well-being. Based on meta-research and statistical studies, twenty eight (28) dimensions have been identified and found to affect Workplace Happiness. The interrelation and interactivity of these dimensions influence the happiness at work. The twenty eight (28) dimensions were formulated from a meta-analysis and review of the various literatures of positive psychology, employee engagement, and well-being research.

Underpinned by the theory of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, these dimensions are categorised into four element groupings:

- 1) Satisfaction element measures the employees' cognitive judgment based on work-related hygiene dimensions such as salary and benefits, respect, employment stability, etc.
- 2) Alignment element measures the employees' affective organisational commitment based on social dimensions such as culture, interpersonal relations, brand identity, etc.
- 3) Engagement element measures the employees' affective work involvement and enjoyment based on personal growth dimensions such as autonomy, learning opportunities, degree of variation of tasks, etc.
- 4) Well-being element measures the employees' mental well-being and psychological strengths such as self efficacy, resilience, significance, etc.

The key findings from the project are summarised as follows:

1. **We can be happier.** The Overall Workplace Happiness Index is 59, which falls into the band of "Under Happy" (index 51-67). "Under Happy" is a band in between "Unhappy" (Index 0-50) and "Happy" (Index 68-100). Depending on whether we take on the view of half-empty or half-full, the result means that there is certainly potential room of us to enhance workplace happiness in the country.

2. **There are multiple facets to workplace happiness.** As obtained from our study, all identified twenty eight (28) dimensions are significant to the measure of workplace happiness. What this offers is an opportunity for us to be innovative and flexible when it comes to the implementation of workplace happiness initiatives.
3. **Our happiness is related to our personal perception of the job and the experience at work.** The Happiness Drivers derived from the survey are: *Brand Identity, Positive Emotions, Achievement, Culture, Role Identity, and Hope*, which are dimensions that are sensitive in affecting workplace happiness. What this means is that the ability of an organisation in eliciting pride, positive emotions, sense of achievement, future outlook, as well as improving on its culture and role fit would have a large influence on how happy its employees feel.
4. **The workplace happiness drivers are not universal.** There are unique happiness drivers that play a relatively more important role specific to a certain profile group:
 - Fair and inclusive workplace for the Female workers
 - Ergonomics related to working environment and condition for the Baby Boomers (born before 1964)
 - Positive emotions at workplace for the Generation Y (born after 1980) and in the public sector
 - Learning and growth opportunities in local SMEs
 - Trust in management in the Multi-Nationals

This study derives the first National Workplace Happiness Index for Singapore, which can serve as a benchmark point for future studies, whether it is in the area of factor analysis or longitudinal study. It can also be used as a benchmark for any organisation to compare their current Workplace Happiness with the national or industry benchmark.

While the survey is highly reliable, it is definitely not an end in itself. Some of the interesting dimensions can be analysed with more depth, possibly through a more precise study that only looks specifically at the dimension and its possible sub-areas, or through qualitative data gathering such as focus group or interviews to obtain a larger perspective of the issues explored.

Also, with the explosion of research in the field of positive psychology in organisational development theory, such as Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) and Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), there could be new dimensions for us to explore for future Workplace Happiness research, which is something any modern organisation leadership needs to be equipped with and updated of.

More importantly, we hope the NWHS project creates the first step – as a ripple for Workplace Happiness – by generating awareness, appreciation and possible development in this area of organisational development, with the goal to make our workplace a better and more sustainable one.