

Gen-Y stereotype lives on

Generation Y workers appear unable to shake their old stereotypes, according to a new study of Singapore workplaces. The 'Y are they different?' study, by Temasek Polytechnic and GMP Group, shows younger workers are still perceived to have poor work ethics and a fear of long hours.

It also indicates a wide disparity between the work preferences, attitudes and beliefs of different generations. While Generation Y workers want their bosses to be "caring", "inspiring" and "competent", those same managers believe it is more important to be "competent", "honest" and "forward-looking".

But it is the difference in work ethic perceptions that are most stark. Other generations rated their younger Gen-Y colleague's work effort at 3.79, with the lowest ratings indicating the most industrious ethic.

By contrast, Generation Y rated their colleagues' efforts at 3.12, a significant 17.6% lower (harder working) than the score those generations offered them.

Interestingly, all generations noticed the bias inherent in their organisations equally.

Josh Goh, senior manager of The GMP Group, says employers need to tread carefully, and base their decisions on clear rationales, not stereotypes. "Where such perceptions exist, it is important for companies to examine their validity, bearing in mind the detrimental impact that unfounded stereotypes and biases may have on generational harmony at the workplace," he said.



\$920 million: The total bill for the first of four Government payments to Singapore employers under the Jobs Credit scheme.



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HR skills still in demand

Companies are still looking to hire HR professionals, albeit mostly for contract positions, according to the latest Robert Walters report into the sector. Its HR market update, released in late March, shows a three-fold rise in demand for contract HR employees, especially those with HR project management expertise.

Also highly sought-after are rewards (compensation and benefits) candidates and HR business partners with strong commercial mindsets. Candidates who can show organisational effectiveness experience are also in demand as employers focus their attention on streamlining or restructuring operations.

Many candidates rank company and job stability as the most important factor when it comes to making their career move. As such, ministries and statutory boards, which have seen a brain drain of HR professionals to the private sector over the last two years, are now seeing a surge in job applications as candidates seek a more stable environment.

In general, recruitment activity in the financial services sector has slowed down considerably. Other sectors, such as manufacturing, engineering and the oil and gas industries, are also taking a similarly cautious approach to hiring HR staff.