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PAGE: 6

YOUNG PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEIR IDEAL WORKPLACE

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In a session with Leaderonomics during the 2013 Career Conference in Sunway University, students got together to discuss their ideal workplace.

More than a hundred students from universities including UM, UPM, IIUM, Taylors, MMU, Inti, Segi, Monash, and UniKL participated with Sunway University students in the conference entitled *Empowering Today's Generation for Tomorrow's Workforce*.

The undergraduates, aged 19 and above in their second and third year of studies, were from varying faculties and degrees including accounting, finance, economics, business, engineering, IT and psychology.

DEAL-BREAKERS

When asked to rank top five items based on importance from a list of 10 aspects, the results were rather insightful in terms of what employers should consider taking into account.

Pay and bonus

Not surprisingly, pay and bonus were on almost all of the lists, about 95% of groups. Thirty per cent listed it as a number one priority, 20% ranked it second and third, 15% in fourth place and 10% in the fifth position.

The young adults cited the ever rising cost of living for their decision and stated the importance of a salary that met those needs.

Career advancement opportunities

Equally popular on the students' lists was career advancement opportunities. Nineteen groups (95%) found this aspect important.

Thirty per cent of them listed it as their top priority while 10% found it secondary. Fifty per cent listed it in the third position and 5% in the fifth.

These future employees say they value being given the chance to grow and progress within an organisation; most view it as a sign of trust.

Good bosses

Good bosses were found on 70% of the lists. Ten per cent felt it to be of utmost importance because good bosses ultimately steered the direction of the company and led to better benefits. Twenty per cent ranked this aspect in the second place, 15% fourth and 25% fifth.

Non-monetary benefits

A number of groups saw value in non-monetary benefits. Some believed that it reflects how the company values employees.

A total of 60% put this aspect on their lists. Five per cent each ranked it in the first or third position, 10% second, 15% fourth and a quarter in the final position.

Fun and trendy work environment

Fun and trendy working environment made it into 55% groups' lists. Five per cent viewed it as priority, 15% ranked it in second position or third and 20% fifth.

They cited reasons such as an increase in productivity as a result of a stimulating working environment.

Employee empowerment

A culture of employee empowerment was important to 45% of the groups. Five per cent placed it in the first or third spot, 10% in second, and 25% fourth.

Values

Good organisational values mattered to 30% of the groups. Some of them placed value in knowing if a company is profit or people oriented. Five per cent placed it in the first, third or fourth positions while 10% placed this aspect in the second position.

Work-life balance

A minority, a quarter of the groups, saw value in work-life balance. These groups were not too fond of long working hours because they wanted time to invest in other aspects of their life.

Five per cent placed it in the second of fifth spot on their list while 15% placed it in the fourth position.

Big and reputable company

A mere 20% placed importance on working for a big and reputable company. Ten per cent saw this as a priority while 5% put it in the third, fourth or fifth spot on their respective lists.

Strategic office location

One interesting finding to note however, is that none of the groups placed importance on strategic office location.

This could be because there were many other important aspects they could not compromise on or that they genuinely were not affected by the location of the workplace and didn't mind travelling.

IDEAL BOSSES

When asked about their ideal bosses, they listed a wide variety of attributes they'd like bosses to have. They valued open-mindedness, flexibility, integrity, wisdom, charisma, humility, kindness, fairness and supportiveness.

An ideal boss has to be able to wear a lot of hats. Vinosha Jothiraja from Monash University is of the opinion that "an ideal boss should be able to switch roles accordingly to suit both the needs of the company and employees".

It was important that bosses were goal-oriented, ambitious, visionary, and driven.

They also placed importance on having a boss who was a good leader, mentor or role model who provided opportunities for learning.

They wanted bosses who were empathic, considerate, understanding and more significantly, approachable.

One particular group very eloquently conveyed their ideals by saying "an ideal boss is one who is understanding towards employee needs, fair in making decisions, responsible in his job, to his employees and to the company in general, exudes the leadership capacity to drive his team, and inspires not only his subordinates but also others who know him by laying the scaffoldings of a legacy for others to emulate".

The university students likened their ideal bosses to various figures. Among the analogies students made included their bosses being like an ideal father, best friend, a future wife and not surprisingly, Harvey Specter from Suits. One

