

NEWS/BUSINESS/FINANCE/LIFESTYLE EDITORS
For Immediate Release

Employees Perceive Hong Kong's Work-Life Balance as Deteriorating Compared to 10 Years Ago

Half of Companies are Still Reluctant to Move to A 5-Day Work Week

Yet, more employers value work-life balance as a business issue and more employees are taking responsibility for their own work-life balance

Hong Kong, 28 October 2015 – Community Business, a not-for-profit focusing on corporate responsibility and a thought leader on diversity and inclusion in Asia, today announced the results of **The State of Work-Life Balance in Hong Kong 2015 Survey**, sponsored by **Hysan Development Company Limited**. For its 10th anniversary of the survey which began in 2006, Community Business took a 10-year view when compiling this report. The survey findings highlight that an increasing number of companies appreciate the importance of work-life balance as a business issue, and more employees realise they themselves play a key role in achieving their own work-life balance. However, employees perceive Hong Kong's work-life balance has worsened as compared to 10 years ago.

Photo Link:

www.communitybusiness.org/events/2015/151028_WLB_Survey_Launch.htm

Commissioned to the Public Opinion Programme, University of Hong Kong, this is the 10th annual benchmark survey. More than 1,000 employees, aged 15 or above, working full-time in Hong Kong, were interviewed through random telephone sampling.

According to the survey, the score given by Hong Kong employees for the extent to which they have achieved their ideal work-life balance is 6.0 out of 10, which has remained fairly static over the past decade, ranging from 5.7 to 6.2. While scores have generally stayed higher than at the start of the survey, the needle has barely moved.

Despite work-life balance scores remaining relatively static, an alarming 61.8% of respondents said that they feel that work-life balance in Hong Kong has become worse compared to 10 years ago. Surprisingly, almost half of Hong Kong companies (47.8%) are still reluctant to move to a 5-day work week.

Yet, it is encouraging that 68.1% of Hong Kong employees overall believe that work-life balance is valued either to some extent or to a large extent in the work culture of their companies. The mean score given by Hong Kong employees for the extent to which they are responsible for managing their own work-life balance is 7.0 out of 10, revealing that they understand the importance of taking the lead and prioritising their own personal needs. This is validated by an overwhelming 85.0% of employees who stated that being able to manage their work and personal responsibilities according to their own schedule is either quite important or very important to achieving work-life balance. Besides work-life balance policies and initiatives, the survey found that physical workplace location and design could also have an impact on employee's work-life balance, engagement, creativity and productivity.

"Changes in the macro business environment in the aftermath of the financial crisis have put a strain on both employers and employees, which has resulted in the worsening perception of Hong Kong's work-life balance even though more companies today value work-life balance and appreciate it as an important business issue," said Mrs Fern Ngai, CEO of Community Business.

"The findings indicate that although Hong Kong's employers are starting to better understand that work-life balance is a business imperative, employees are far from satisfied with their work-life

balance. Employers cannot ignore this, or else they risk disengaging their staff and losing talent. This is particularly true for the millennial generation who dare to challenge the status quo, are vocal about their needs, and are more likely to consider quitting to pursue better work-life balance.”

“To reap the benefits of work-life balance, companies need to shift from offering initiatives on a one-off basis or as token gestures of goodwill, to a more strategic approach that integrates such activities into routine business practice. With signs that work-life balance is recognised as a joint responsibility between employers and employees, and the shifting workforce demographics driving positive change, we at Community Business are optimistic that the state of work-life balance in Hong Kong will continue to improve,” continued Mrs Ngai.

Work-Life Balance Week

In order to raise the awareness of work-life balance as a critical business issue, Community Business has been engaging the business sector through educational workshops, training sessions and consultancy work. In addition, Community Business has run an awareness-raising campaign, introducing Work-Life Balance Day in Hong Kong for the first time in October 2008, which then expanded to a Week every October and extended across Asia. By focusing companies' efforts on showing commitment to work-life balance and providing visible support to their employees during the Week, this campaign has proven the power of collective action in raising awareness of an important issue to the business community.

However, many of the initiatives undertaken by companies have been on a one-off basis and not sustained beyond Work-Life Balance Week. To help companies move forward in their work-life balance journey and to understand the business benefits a long-term strategic approach can bring, Community Business has introduced more stringent criteria for participation since 2014, requiring companies to have formal written policies on their work-life balance options and on flexible working arrangements, integrating work-life balance into routine business practice. As a result, around 70 companies signed up as participating companies in the Work-Life Balance Week 2015, with many other companies showing commitment to implement the changes necessary for participation in the future.

Even with a lower number of participating companies than in previous years, Community Business is encouraged by the number of companies who are clearly taking a more committed and strategic approach to work-life balance, reaping the benefits that a supportive culture and flexible work programme can have on their bottom line.

For the full list of participating companies, please refer to <http://www.communitybusiness.org/WLB/2015/PO15.htm>

For more information about the Work-Life Balance Week Campaign, please refer to http://www.communitybusiness.org/focus_areas/WLB.htm#key_initiatives

The State of Work-Life Balance in Hong Kong 2015 Survey can be downloaded from Community Business' website at <http://www.communitybusiness.org/library/publications.htm>

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About Community Business

Community Business is a not-for-profit organisation (Hong Kong Charity Number 91/6560) whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to have a positive impact on people and communities. Recognised as a thought leader in corporate responsibility and diversity and inclusion in Asia, Community Business conducts research, facilitates networks and events, leads campaigns and provides consultancy and training. With a focus on Responsible Business, our work is aligned to 5 mission-led themes:

- Investing and supporting local communities
- Tackling inequality in the workplace
- Ensuring happy, healthy, and engaged employees
- Promoting social inclusion
- Building responsible business leadership

Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong with a presence in India and the UK, Community Business works with companies of all sizes and from diverse industries across Asia, harnessing the power of business to drive social change.

For more information, refer to <http://www.communitybusiness.org>.

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