Leading and Managing in the Age of Disruption



Responses and findings from the CEGOS survey of professionals across the Asia Pacific region





Contents

2017

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Getting to grips with the age of disruption

We live in times of unprecedented change – politically, technologically and socially.

Today, inspired individuals and organisations across the globe are exploiting this change to disrupt every industry. Uber, Alibaba and airBnB are just three famous examples of companies that have transformed the way we travel, shop and stay, and there are many more.

Amongst all the uncertainty, however, there is one certainty – established organisations need to adapt to these new changes or face the prospect of failure.

To discover how well leaders and managers are prepared to face the challenges created by industry disrupters, Cegos recently surveyed business, HR and learning leaders, as well as middle management professionals, across the APAC region.

The insights are here in this report and they make for stimulating reading, especially for those who think that everything will be okay if we just keep calm and carry on.

We had over 1,000 responses in 8 countries – Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, China, Australia and The Philippines – and there were some interesting variations in the data from different markets.

Cegos followed up the survey with a one-day event in Singapore, where professionals and disruptors discussed the results and came up with some creative ideas for action. We have included these here, too.

I hope you find this guide useful and inspirational. It has been designed to help you take positive action, and enable your organisation to successfully operate in an increasingly uncertain environment. It should also help your leaders and managers take on the next disruption within your industry, and even create the disruption yourselves!

As ever, Cegos is here as your partner. Our latest suite of training solutions is designed to fully prepare your leaders and managers for the needs of the future, today.

Feel free to reach out if you need us or, indeed, if you have any ideas of your own that could inspire future initiatives.

Jeremy Blain

Regional Managing Director, Cegos Asia Pacific

Survey Results

Our survey in numbers

How many people surveyed?

1,042 iiii



From where?

major APAC Countries





Our Research Focus - Definitions



Technology

Advances in technology are disrupting the way we do business more than ever. In order to innovate and succeed in a competitive marketplace, leaders and managers need to make the best use of new technologies.



The Human Touch

Technology has a big impact on the way we work, but it is important not to lose the human touch. Organisations that reflect this ethos in their work practises and recruitment / retention drives will be the ultimate winners.



Strategy

Good planning, clear communication, along with flexibility and agility, help modern organisations stay ahead of the game in an increasingly complex world.



Productivity

Leaders and managers must keep in touch with their workforce and create an environment that maximises operational efficiencies and productivity.



Technology and Innovation

Technology and Innovation

Advances in technology are disrupting the way we do business more than ever. To innovate and succeed in a competitive marketplace, managers must keep up with the pace of change and understand how to make use of new technologies.

We asked respondents to assess the role of technology in their companies, and how managers utilise it to best effect.

The overall picture is that technology is viewed as a crucial component of modern business. Many managers across the region actively invest in new technologies and take steps to implement it effectively. However, this is not always consistent and there are discrepancies in the way that technology is employed, both internally and externally.

Here are the main findings:

Too many managers lack a good understanding of technology

Most respondents think their managers have an average understanding of technology at best.

28%

feel that managers know very little and are unwilling to learn

44%

think their managers would benefit from more robust technology training

Managers in India and Singapore have the strongest technology know-how...







of **Thailand** respondents say their managers seriously **lack understanding** in this area

In a world driven by technology, organisations must take immediate steps to improve IT knowledge and skills amongst executives.

Investment in technology is generally inadequate for the challenges ahead

29%

of respondents say that too little of their organisation's budget is spent on technology

40%

say more budget should be allocated

Australia and China see most investment, with around

46%





of respondents from each country saying that a **generous budget** is allocated.

Thailand and Malaysia fall behind.





of respondents report that **very little budget** is reserved for technology.

Investment in technology is key to success in most industries. Technology budgets must deliver strong benefits to inspire communication, collaboration and growth.



Few companies consistently employ technologies and tools that better enable internal communication, engagement or collaboration

Only **27%**

of respondents were
confident their
companies use
technology to help them
better work with others
internally and externally

76%

say there is **no clear pipeline** to benefit
employees and
customers

China ahead of the game.

56.6%



respectively say their organisation consistently generates customercentric technology

However,

49%



of Malaysian
respondents say their
organisation produces
very little or no
technology to create
a competitive
advantage

In many organisations, there is an urgency for more technology spend to support internal and customer-facing needs. Spending does happen but it is either too focused on the external or internal; rarely both. Management should align internal and external technologies for the benefit of all, behind a strategy endorsed and driven by leaders.

Few managers have a good or reasonable understanding of how technology benefits customers

77%

of respondents do not have confidence in their managers' knowledge of customer-oriented technology

68%

say that leaders generally lack the necessary awareness

10%

say their managers totally lack any awareness Respondents in **Singapore** and **India**





say there are pockets of **excellence within their organisations where the technology** employed strongly benefits customers

However,

between 40-50%

of respondents in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia







say managers fail to support technologies that help clients.

How to guarantee technology works for your organisation

Technology works best when there is a clear purpose behind it. Companies that employ new technology simply because everyone else uses it rarely see significant benefits.

To ensure technology plays a productive role in your organisation, you should evaluate exactly how it will impact on your people before investing – define your objectives and prioritise the most relevant and supportive technology to grow your business.

Your organisation's internal mindset should be entrepreneurial and treat technology as a friend, not a foe.

Here are some tips for incorporating technology into your business, inspired by leaders attending our 'Leadership and Management in the Age of Disruption' event, in 2017.



Create a supportive learning environment, enabled by the most appropriate technology, that involves everyone across the organisation. The learning process should be enjoyable and collaborative, where colleagues share existing knowledge as well as learn new skills.



Frequently scan the technology environment in relation to your industry, discipline or role. The pace of development is sometimes overwhelming – few people had heard of a smart phone 9 years ago – but can also be exciting. Read blogs and technology articles relevant to your industry, follow tech experts on Twitter, join Facebook and Linkedln groups. Try out interesting technology for yourself – there's no substitute to a personal test drive!



Use technology to automise standard processes and tasks, as well as identify pressure points and reduce risk. Accurate reporting is becoming easier as technology advances, so take advantage of the latest software to keep up-to-date with your Big Data and analytics. This also helps you to scale up and bring in repeat business.



Empower employees by inviting them to generate ideas on how to use new technology. The most creative thinking often comes from your own people – especially those of the younger generation who generally have a strong understanding of cutting-edge technology.



Set up a competition to source technology that meets the hottest needs in your business. For example:

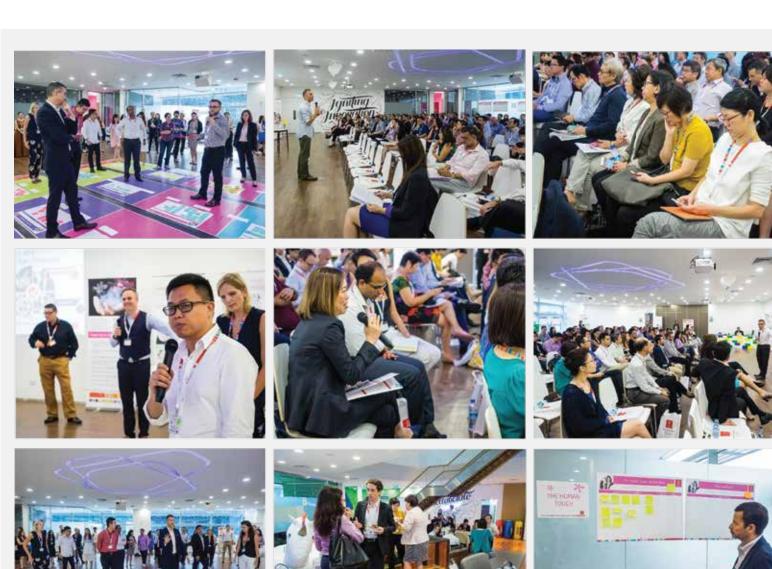
- tech that drives remote communication and collaboration
- community apps that blend business with a social element
- tech that supports line managers with on-the-job coaching and real-time reporting
- learning technology that drives development at the point of need
- customer engagement tools and techniques to drive a higher market profile and brand awareness



Use technology to keep employees engaged and in touch. There are a variety of collaborative and social tools out there, so see what works for your organisation and get on board. Much of this tech is free or low cost.



Encourage employees to use their own devices, if appropriate, as they are comfortable using them. Give them the tools to customise their own personal technology to enable remote working.





THE HUMAN TOUCH

The Human Touch

Technology has a big impact on the way we work, but it is important not to lose the human touch. Organisations that reflect this ethos in their work practises and retention/recruitment drives will be the ultimate winners.

We asked respondents to consider the human factor in their organisation, and how leaders and managers deal with issues that affect morale and productivity.

The good news is that managers across most of the region are responding to calls for greater diversity in their workforce – over two-thirds of people say their organisation welcomes people from different genders, races and generations. Communications between managers and the workforce is also positive, but needs improvement in some cases.

Here are the main findings:

Written and verbal communication needs to be clearer and more relevant

61%

say that, although communication is adequate in their organisation, it should often be clearer and more engaging.

15%

say communication is poor and needs drastic improvement.

Only **33-38%**

of respondents in China, Singapore and Australia







say managers place a high value on communication.

This indicates that over 60% of respondents from across the region agree communication from leaders is valuable to the rest of the organisation and needs to be viewed as such by management themselves – an essential factor that needs addressing everywhere.

One third of managers fail to support the use of communications technology to enable greater sharing and collaboration

74.3%

of respondents feel more could be done to help staff share and collaborate using technology.

Over

40%

believe their senior management must demonstrate a stronger understand and support for the use of technologies that encourage more efficient communication and coworking.





say their managers **strongly support** the use of technology to share and communicate, the highest in our survey.





say their managers do not use enough appropriate technology in this regard.

In Singapore's case, the high degree of technology use in the social environment does not appear to transfer to the workplace.

Many people, especially from the younger generation, expect to work collaboratively in a sharing environment, both physically and digitally. Management should facilitate this by providing the opportunity, infrastructure and technology where appropriate. It needs to be viewed more urgently at the top as a key foundation stone to support ongoing business success.

Communication between managers and the workforce needs to be improved

13%

feel that communication from management is infrequent and usually negative

42% China

of Chinese respondents report a high rating for manager-to-workforce communication

Almost

60%

of respondents demand more frequency of communications from senior management.



in Indonesia say that manager-toworkforce communication is good

Managers must communicate more effectively with their workforce to boost motivation. This helps to improve morale and impacts positively on productivity.



Organisations generally welcome people from different backgrounds, but more can be done to promote diversity

Despite a generally positive response,

47%

say management only value diversity 'to some extent', meaning that organisations must do more to promote equality in the workplace and motivate their staff

Australia and **The Philippines**





are committed to diversity and help create a more inclusive workplace culture, leading the way regionally



while India performed well across most measures in our survey almost one quarter of respondents, the highest in the region, indicated that many organisations do not value diversity as highly as they should. As India continues to expand, managers must address this issue.

How to sustain the human touch

Good communication in essential for maintaining the human touch. Not only should communication be clear and relevant, it must also be frequent and productive. Thankfully, there are lots of actions you can take to encourage employee and management collaboration, as well as inspire good morale.

Here are a few ideas, inspired by leaders attending our 'Leadership and Management in the Age of Disruption' event, in 2017.



Encourage more staff/management interaction with regular 'town hall'-style meetings (where employees can publically ask management questions), staff lunches or other gatherings. Informal activities, such as sports or 'away days', are a great way to build teams and promote dialogue between people at all levels of the organisation. The blend of business and social is key here. Empower your people to innovate by creating a forum for new ideas that management can consider.



Use technology to enable communication and information sharing. Apps like Skype, Whatsapp, WeChat, 'chatbots' and cloud-based services help promote communication, especially when staff are in different locations. The downside is that it can be intrusive (for example, if staff members are messaged during their vacation), so set guidelines on proper use. We must have rules of the road.



Create open spaces or hot-desking opportunities for staff to work together, rather than keeping everyone ensconced in separate offices. Collaboration between colleagues and co-working are key to maintaining the human touch in an increasingly digital world.



Keep your talent engaged by putting them on a staff development plan with long-term goals they can own and drive. Use new technology to pair up staff as mentors. Down the line, use experienced leaders to help people navigate the internal and external waters.



Be creative with staff appraisals. Replace rigid grading and reviews with something more interactive, focusing on human outcomes, such as training and coaching, rather than on 'box-ticking' exercises. Managers could be given a discretionary budget to recognise high performing staff where appropriate. Incorporate succession planning into development plans to give your employees something to aim for.



Avoid treating your staff like robots – ensure they don't burn out and have regular opportunities to re-energise.



Take a new approach to recruitment, thinking with your heart as well as your head. Employ alternative ways of getting to know the candidates, rather than relying solely on a CV. For example, ask for video clips of the candidate explaining why they want to work for you. Develop an exciting on-boarding process that starts off new employees with a good impression and the desire to succeed in your organisation.



Train managers in the 5 Languages of Appreciation concept to understand how to communicate effectively with others. Encourage mentoring at all levels, including getting people lower down the organisation to mentor management ('reverse mentoring').





















Strategy

Good planning and clear communication, along with flexibility and agility, help modern organisations stay ahead of the game in an increasingly complex world.

We asked respondents to reflect on the effectiveness of their organisation's strategy and the management culture that influences it.

Around a quarter of our respondents say their organisation follows a well-defined strategy and that they have significant influence in how that strategy is designed. Meaning almost 75% of respondents feel this is a growing area of concern.

To reinforce this point, many respondents say that strategy usually comes from the top and is frequently unclear or badly communicated.

Here are the main findings:

30% say their organisation does not have a clear strategy in place

of respondents say that 15% strategy is followed only to some extent.

so more must be done to communicate and implement strategy effectively. These low figures should ring alarm bells within some organisations. Management seems far too removed from the operational reality, meaning strategy is often defined in isolation. As a result, strategy is not fully committed to, or is regularly forced to change.

An impressive

42%



of **Chinese** respondents think their company follows a welldefined strategy

But the opposite was true for those in the Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.







on average report that **no clear** strategy is followed

In order to achieve success, managers must ensure that welldefined strategies are in place, and communicate them clearly to the workforce.

There is too much top-down management in our organisations

Only 28%

of respondents think management encourage a collaborative approach.

Almost 40%

saying their company adopts a top-down approach.

Over 30%

say it is a mix of the two.

Australia was the best performer in our survey

40%



of respondents reporting a **strong**, **collaborative mindset amongst management**. The best performer in our survey but still with a significant percentage responding that this needs to improve.

The top-down approach no longer works effectively, so bigger organisations need to make their structure more collaborative.

Few people feel empowered to influence strategy

42% suggest they have substantial influence.

23% feel they have little or no influence on strategy.

China and Australia fair best in this regard.

Between **51-53%**



in The Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia say they have very little say in strategy.

Managers throughout the APAC region should take action to empower their staff. This can have a positive impact on strategic thinking as well as the bottom line.



Over **75%** of all respondents state their company needs to do better when it comes to adapting to and managing sudden change

A staggering

34%

of respondents said that their organisation struggles to respond to sudden change.

and a further

43%

say they could do better.

Singapore faired best with

37%



saying their organisations were strong, agile and flexible. But even as the top performer, the Singapore data indicates that over 60% of respondents felt that improvement was needed.

Between 46-54%

of respondents in









Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and The Philippines say that their organisations struggle when faced with sudden change.

Organisations must ensure there is a clear strategy in place to deal with unexpected events or unpredictable environments.

How to successfully implement your strategy

You can effectively design your company strategy by taking ideas from across the organisation. New technologies can also help you make informed decisions.

Importantly, strategies should be accessible and achievable, and communicated clearly to all staff.

Here are some ideas for strategy implementation, inspired by leaders attending our 'Leadership and Management in the Age of Disruption' event, in 2017.



Crowdsource ideas to create new and exciting strategies. Too often, management ignore the knowledge and experience of people involved in the day-to-day work of the company. By inviting input from people who interact with customers and create the product, there is more scope for innovation. Set up online forums or organise 'town hall' meetings to get these ideas rolling in. Recognition and reward can be incorporated into the mix to engage the right people internally. This is a far more inclusive approach that creates more parity within your organisation, rather than reinforcing traditional hierarchies and precedents.



Ensure strategy is purpose driven and consistent by sharing with people across the organisation. Invite others to comment on strategy in the making, to ensure it is relevant to all concerned and that they become invested in it. Use appropriate technology to facilitate this. (see Technology section)



Reward calculated risk. It's easy to play safe and avoid mishaps, but this can prevent your people from being creative and innovative. When you incorporate a culture of risk-taking, you give your people space to come up with some truly inspired ideas that could rocket your company into interesting places. You must also inspire success, but that will come naturally when your people feel comfortable with failure.



Create strategies that are enjoyable to implement, even playful. The idea of gamification – adding an element of play or competition to normally dull processes or activities – can inspire employee engagement.



Link Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to strategy, and use factors such as Big Data and analytics to inform actions that drive up profits. The latest technology provides you with accurate and in-depth information, so you can easily identity potential pitfalls as well as opportunities. Better still, share this data across your organisation to see what others think.



























Productivity

Leaders and managers must keep in touch with their workforce and create an environment that maximises operational efficiencies and productivity. With a willingness to act, and action to remove unnecessary obstacles, organisations can really thrive in a tough marketplace.

We asked respondents to reflect on productivity and how well it is supported by senior management.

Over one third of respondents say they are given enough time and resources to work productively and are not overburdened by emails and phone calls. This is encouraging for organisations that fit this pattern. The rest have some work to do to improve productivity amongst the workforce.

Here are the main findings:

Too many people feel they are not given enough time and resources to work productively

66%

of respondents say they
do not feel fully
supported to do their job
properly.

41% in India



44%



believe they are well-resourced.

49% in Malaysia

44% in Indonesia



say they are significantly under-resourced.

Tight budgets may not help, but managers can support their people by giving them the space to work productively, as well as the tools to be more efficient.



People cope generally well with the number of emails and phone calls they receive, but are occasionally overwhelmed

A total of 62%

of respondents say they are either occasionally or frequently overwhelmed by emails and phone calls, so managers should create strategies to stop this from being too disruptive.

Respondents in India seem best able to cope with

45%



suggesting emails and phone calls are not much of a burden.

Managers must respond to problems or inefficiencies quicker

64%

of respondents think managers are generally too slow to respond to problems or often fail to respond at all. Most confidence in manager response comes from India

38%



39-43%

of respondents in The Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand







say that responses are way too slow.

Managers must put systems in place to identify problems as soon as they occur, then take steps to rectify them in a reasonable time frame.



Today's managers are generally close to the realities of day-to-day operations... but there is still room for improvement

50%

of respondents say that, whilst their managers have some awareness of what goes on, they sometimes don't understand the complexities at operational level well enough.

Almost 20%

say their managers are too distant from the workforce.

The good news is

31%

have full confidence that their managers know what is happening on the 'shop floor'. This was helped by an impressive

62%



of respondents in **China** saying that managers are **very close to the action**, the highest across the region

It is clear from this survey that China has continued to improve across all measures. They have broken down more traditional barriers and shown the way for other countries, notably in SE Asia, who may still be hindered by tradition and culturally-driven expectations. A more flexible approach helps organisations compete in an internationalised and open business environment, so this is a strong and urgent message for some of the countries within our survey.

How to boost productivity in your organisation

There are many initiatives you can take to boost productivity in the workplace. Some of these actions – such as improving communication and empowering your workforce – have already been covered, but there are plenty more ideas for getting the most out of your people and resources, inspired by leaders attending our 'Leadership and Management in the Age of Disruption' event, in 2017.



Be agile. Leaders should define what agile means to their organisation, as well as identify barriers and actively remove them so that managers and teams can adapt quicker. This allows them to perform without the constant 'noise' of issues, problems and roadblocks.



Take steps to become a leaner organisation by cutting layers of bureaucracy and management down to the bare necessities. Many organisations slow down operations because too many people are involved in the decision-making process. If you can have one or two people being responsible for certain decisions, as opposed to four or five, things happen much quicker and probably more efficiently.



Limit meetings to the minimum number of people needed and don't waste the time of people who will not benefit from being there. If in doubt, follow the 'two pizza' rule – meetings should have no more people than can comfortably share two pizzas!



As an alternative to meetings, have mini-huddles of maximum two hours with a couple of critical agenda points, clear outcome-focused objectives and some actions to follow. This agile method makes the whole process leaner, more dynamic and more relevant. It helps leaders and managers cut the 'nice to have' and focus on the 'need to do'.



Set regular targets and talk to those responsible for implementing them to maintain realistic expectations.



Establish a greater amount of trust. Checks and balances are important in business, but sometimes we let them get out of hand. Trusting your people to do the job well often pays dividends and improves morale by giving colleagues ownership and responsibility. It also reduces the need for micro-management, which impedes productivity more often than not.



Promote a diversity of thought. When opinions and ideas are formed within the management bubble, there tends to be a very little room for opposition. Whilst you don't want to encourage opposition for the sake of it, getting a range of viewpoints helps you make better decisions and reduces the chances of poor implementation.



Automate where you can. Automation certainly helps your people be productive when it takes away the need for laborious tasks. However, avoid automation that takes away too much of the human element (see The Human Touch).

























Country by country survey results

The results so far represent the Asia Pacific region in general. Here are some interesting highlights from responses in your local market.



Australia



Organisations in Australia generally score highly in many areas of our survey. For example:

42%

say that their organisation is successoriented and involves everybody, although management needs to be closer to the action (see below)

61%

say that their organisation values diversity and individual contributions (highest amongst all countries in our survey)

However, there are still some problems with management style and investment in technology that need to be addressed, particularly when it comes to dealing with sudden changes or inefficiencies.





Technology and Innovation

- 32% say that very little investment is made in technology, although 46% say a generous budget is allocated
- 58% say that management lack the necessary awareness of technology

The Human Touch

ullet 56% say that management need to promote more technology to enable collaboration

Strategy

- 67% say their organisation needs to do better in adapting to sudden changes in the market
- 64% say they only have some or little influence on strategy

Productivity

- \sim 67% say that management needs to respond quicker to inefficiencies
- 65% say that management are sometimes distant and need to be closer to the action

Key Actions

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- However, management in Australia should look at technology budgets to see if more investment and promotion would make a positive difference.
- They should also take steps to make their systems and processes leaner and more efficient to aid productivity.
- Finally, employees should be given a greater role in decision making and in influencing strategy.

China



Organisations in China have enjoyed significant growth over the last decade. As the country seeks dominance in the global market, closer attention is being paid to management style and the contributions made by workers at all levels. Respondents in China rated their companies highly in many aspects. For example:

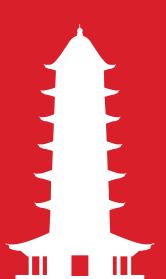
47%

say a generous budget is allocated for technology

63%

say managers show a keen awareness of the working environment and set realistic expectations

This suggests there is greater degree of satisfaction compared to other APAC countries. That said, there are some areas for improvement, particularly in terms of communication, hierarchy and the burden of emails and phone calls.





Technology and Innovation

59% say their organisation should promote more technology that specifically benefits their customers

The Human Touch

- $\sim 66\%$ say that communication needs to be clearer and more engaging
- $\sim 58\%$ say there should be better communication between managers and the workforce

Strategy

- ullet 80% say management need to improve response rates to sudden changes in the market
- 48% say there is mainly a top-down approach to management of the organisation

Productivity

 $^{-}$ 58% say email and phone calls are often a burden and get in the way of productivity

Key Actions

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- Management in Chinese organisations should assess company structure and incorporate measures to involve the workforce at lower levels.
- They should also work on improving communications, perhaps by employing new technology to keep employees up-to-date with the latest initiatives.
- Finally, management should look at improving productivity by reducing the burden of emails and phone calls. Some automation will help here.

India



Organisations in India scored quite highly in many areas of our survey. For example:

41%

say they are given enough time and resources to work productively

36%

say that managers support technologies that benefit people and customers, although general awareness is lacking (see below)

Issues with company structure remain, particularly when it comes to valuing diversity and the individual. Over one-third of respondents say they have no influence on strategy, which is a substantial figure considering most are from middle-management or above.





- ightharpoonup 69% say that more investment in technology is needed
- 63% say managers need to have more awareness of current technology

The Human Touch

- 72% say there should be more productive manager-to-workforce communication
- 79% say there should be more diversity and appreciation of the individual in their organisation

Strategy

- 80% say their organisation does not always follow a clearly-defined strategy
- 37% say they have no influence on strategy

Productivity

• 62% say management needs to respond quicker to problems or inefficiencies

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- Management should take immediate steps to address the lack of employee engagement, and put in place measures to modernise company structure.
- They should also evaluate the diversity of their workforce and implement schemes that attract a wider range of talent, where appropriate.
- Communication with the workforce also needs to be improved, perhaps by using technology to facilitate greater collaboration.

Indonesia



Organisations in Indonesia generally score quite low in most categories of our survey.

However, one positive stood out, namely that

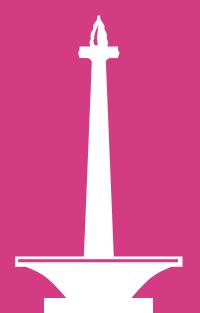
32%

say their organisation **strongly values diversity and individual contribution**

56%

saying this was true to some extent.

Nearly half of the respondents from the country say they have very little input into strategy and the impression left is that management, in the main, is inflexible and old-fashioned. Over a quarter of respondents feel that communication is poor, both internally and externally, so this is another issue to be addressed.





- 72% say managers need more understanding of tech. Half of these respondents feel management seriously lack understanding
- 73% say more budget needs to be invested in technology

The Human Touch

- 26% say that communications are poor and unclear
- 83% say manager-to-workforce communication needs to be improved

Strategy

- 47% say their organisation does not follow a well-defined strategy
- 54% say their management struggle to adapt to sudden changes
- 53% say they have virtually no influence on strategy

Productivity

- 44% say they lack the time and resources to do their job productively
- 80% say their management needs to be quicker in reacting to inefficiencies

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- However, management must take immediate actions to revise company structure and how decisions are made. They should try to reduce the amount of top-down decision making and involve their employees more, as well as take steps to improve communications.
- Finally, more time and resources should be given to staff to make them productive. This includes a more creative approach to distributing workload, as much as any financial investment.

Malaysia



Of all the countries that took part in our survey, Malaysia appears to have the most work to do to remain competitive in the APAC region.

That said, there are a few areas where management in Malaysia do well:

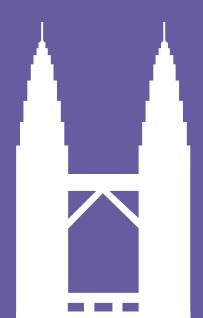
86%

say that **communications are excellent or generally good**. However,
there are some issues with management
communications (see below)

38%

say **emails and phone calls are not a burden**

On the negative side, management are too slow in adapting to change and responding to problems. In addition, nearly half our respondents say they are not given enough time or resources to do their jobs properly, so this needs to be addressed.





- 35% say management have very little understanding of technology
- 40% say there is too little investment in technology

The Human Touch

- 58% say they want more meaningful manager-to-workforce communications
- 40% say management could do more to support technology that enables collaboration

Strategy

- 48% say their organisations do not follow a well-defined strategy
- ullet 51% say that management often struggles to adapt to sudden changes

Productivity

- 49% say they are not given enough time or resources to work productively
- 42% say management are very slow or fail to respond to inefficiencies

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- However, organisations in Malaysia need to improve strategic thinking and become more flexible as a matter of urgency.
- The fact that over half of the people we surveyed think that management struggles to adapt to sudden changes means that Malaysian companies must take steps to become more agile.
- Similarly, productivity should be addressed, with better communications and more investment in technology to help people do their jobs effectively.

The Philippines



As a service industries hub, The Philippines performed well in various aspects of our survey.

56%

say their organisation **strongly values diversity and individual contribution**(significantly above average)

36%

say that a **generous budget is allocated to technology**. However, the budget could be spent more appropriately (see below)

Management falls short when it comes to running business effectively. Too many people see a lack of strategy as a problem, whilst substantial numbers say they are under-resourced. The high number of people who say their organisation does not always follow a well-defined strategy should ring alarm bells, as this inevitably contributes to failures in other aspects of business.





- 79% say management lack sufficient knowledge of technology
- = 91% say their organisation does not adequately use to technology to benefit customers

The Human Touch

- 56% say their organisation promotes diversity and values the individual
- 75% say they want more productive manager-to-workforce communications

Strategy

- 82% say their organisations does not always follow a well-defined strategy
- 53% say they have no influence on strategy at all

Productivity

- 43% say management are too slow or often fail to respond to inefficiencies
- 54% say they are not given time and resources to work productively, or need more of both

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- Based on our survey, however, management in The Philippines should take immediate steps to improve productivity.
- It is a concern that many people believe management are too slow or fail to respond to sudden changes. A very dedicated younger generation is being frustrated by those who hold legacy leadership positions and rule by very hierarchical approach. Management are not dynamic enough to change the game and, in many cases, do not value up-the-line suggestions.
- Agility is also a key roadblock for The Philippines, so those at the top should improve flexibility and encourage lean management.
- Finally, the lack of well-defined strategies also needs to be addressed, perhaps by inviting more ideas from employees and improving management-to-workforce communications.

Singapore



As one of the giants in the services market, Singapore performed well across all areas of our survey. For example:

37%

say their management is very strong, agile and flexible

39%

of respondents say that knowledge and awareness of technology is high amongst management

However, productivity and strategy issues abound, and it is clear that management in Singapore have much to do in order to remain competitive.





- 74% say that not enough budget for technology is allocated
- 72% say that management needs to do more to promote technology that creates a competitive advantage

Whilst nearly 40% say management have a strong awareness of technology, managers seem to lack the desire or skills to implement it successfully into their own organisations. Technology knowhow is probably driven by social use, so there are opportunities in Singapore to bring this into the workplace with tools that fuel collaboration, efficient communication and peer connectivity, as well as promote better customer engagement. Organisations therefore must have a strategy to implement technology, both internally and externally, for maximum advantage.

The Human Touch

- 57% say that communications are unclear or could be improved
- 77% say management could do more to support communications technology that enables collaboration.

This reinforces the assertion that appropriate technology is in place but there needs to be a strategy to use it effectively, which would have an enormously positive impact on productivity.

Strategy

- 40% say they have no influence on strategy at all
- 39% say there is a top-down approach from management

Senior management across Singapore appear not to be ready to take on the world's disruptors. Too many respondents say they have little awareness of or influence on company strategy, which affects productivity and creates too many barriers to progress.

Productivity

- \sim 67% say they don't have enough time or resources to work productively
- 76% say their managers are not close enough to operations and, in some cases, very distant

Productivity in Singapore is usually a management issue, and could be drastically improved by removing barriers to progress, such as layers of hierarchy, opportunities for conflict, too much red tape, etc. With greater line and senior management support, workers will be able to perform much more successfully.



- Responses from our survey highlight significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on. However, there are gaps around productivity, strategy and open communication which need to be addressed.
- To make progress, leaders and managers in Singapore should move away from the top-down approach to management and involve people more at other levels of the organisation. Empowering your people enables them to take ownership of the work they do and boosts results.
- Management should take steps to improve communications, both externally and internally, using technology where appropriate.
- Employees should be given appropriate time and resources to work productively, as too many people feel they lack this at present.

Thailand



A world leader in hospitality and manufacturing, Thailand showed some strengths in our survey:

35%

say their organisation **strongly values diversity and individual contribution**

32%

is frequent and constructive (4% above average in our survey), although the quality of communication in other areas is a concern

There were also substantial weaknesses, not least in the areas of strategy and investment in technology. Management responses to change and inefficiencies are also a worry and need to be addressed.





- 42% say their managers have very little understanding of technology
- 51% say too little budget is invested in new technology

The Human Touch

- 79% say there is a need to make external communications clearer and more engaging
- 86% say that management does not promote the use of collaborative tools enough

Strategy

- 54% say their organisation does not follow a well-defined strategy
- 47% say that management struggle to adapt to sudden changes

Productivity

- 78% say management are generally too slow to respond to inefficiencies
- 42% say they are not overburdened with emails or phone calls

- Responses from our survey highlighted significant strengths in terms of leader and manager readiness, so there is much to build on.
- However, management in Thailand should address the lack of investment in technology. The country has plentiful resources here, particularly in the cities, so more can be done to modernise systems and processes.
- Secondly, it is a concern that so many people feel their companies do not follow a well-defined strategy. This shows a need for more strategic thinking and initiatives to modernise; pulling away from old-fashioned ways of doing business.
- Finally, management should incorporate procedures to efficiently deal with change and problem areas. Good use of technology to analyse Big Data and communicate with staff will help enormously.

Get ready to deal with disruption!

Leaders and managers across the Asia Pacific must do more to adapt to changes caused by the disrupters in their market. This is clear from our survey results.

Each country has its own prevalent strengths and weaknesses, but thankfully it's not too late to overcome today's challenges and remain competitive now and for tomorrow.

We hope you found inspiration within these pages, and wish you luck in surviving – and growing – in the age of disruption.

Further guidance

We regularly publish resources to help inspire change and innovation. Here are a few links you may be interested in:

<u>A match made in recruitment heaven</u> – how one company is disrupting the recruitment market. Link: http://www.cegos.com.sg/insights/match-made-recruitment-heaven/

<u>Challenging the establishment in the age of disruption</u> – an interview with Steen Puggaard, CEO of 4 Fingers Crispy Chicken. Link: http://www.cegos.com.sg/insights/challenging-establishment-age-disruption/

<u>Are your leaders ready for changes in a turbulent economy?</u> – some advice on dealing with uncertainty. Link: http://www.cegos.com.sg/insights/leaders-ready-challenges-turbulent-uncertain-economy/

You can also download our free white paper on <u>5 drivers for essential success in the 2020s workplace</u>. Link: http://www.cegos.com.sg/research-papers/5-drivers-essential-success-2020s-workplace/

To further support your leaders and managers in the age of disruption, you can pick up some great tips and advice from our free download – <u>Learning Innovation Handbook</u> - inspired by best practices across the globe.

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"Jeremy has consistently demonstrated the dedication, vision and skills required to be considered among the best"

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About Cegos Group



Cegos, Europe's largest training organisation, is one of the major international players across the Asia Pacific region, based at its regional HQ in Singapore, with operations in China and Hong Kong. A network of region-wide partners ensures Cegos supports learning and development anywhere, in any language, consistent with a truly "Think Global, Learn Local" philosophy.

Cegos provides a multi-mode approach to training and development through delivery mechanisms ranging from face-to-face to blended learning and eLearning. The content for all delivery methods comes ready-made across a range of professional and personal development topics for managers and their teams, which can be customised to suit a client's environment or built to exacting specifications.

The Cegos Group was founded in 1926 in France, and is one of the world leaders in professional training for managers and their teams. We help develop over 250,000 managers internationally each year, with a turnover of over 220 million Euros per annum.

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