



Workplace battle of the sexes

RedBalloon.com.au and Insync Surveys reveal what women (and men) want in the workplace

Monday 19 September 2011: Australia and New Zealand's Dream Employers have been identified, highlighting some interesting differences when it comes to the battle of the sexes, and the generation gap. Now in its second year, the Insync Surveys and RedBalloon Dream Employers Survey – Australia and New Zealand's largest public employer of choice survey with over 7100 votes from the general public – saw Google hold onto its number one ranking, followed by self-employment, Virgin Group, Apple and Qantas.

The top ten employer lists for both sexes features eight of the same companies, but exclusive to the female list were the Walt Disney Group and Getaway, whereas males dream of working for mining giant BHP Billiton and NASA.

In terms of why the sexes chose these employers over others, workplace culture was the driving force for women, while men prioritised pay, benefits and conditions.

And according to gender expert and co-founder of Gender Worx Dr Karen Morley, the male and female results show a bias towards stereotypic employers and industries.

"Gender forms a fundamental part of our belief systems and plays a key role in shaping our decisions, including those concerning career and employer decisions, so this result is no surprise," Dr Morley said.

"We choose to be with others who are most like us, those with whom we share an affinity such as the same gender, which is part of why some industries are dominated by one gender over another. Defence, which comes in at sixteenth on the list with men casting 82 per cent of the total votes, is a familiar example.

"It is less likely that women will project themselves into male-dominated industries or vice versa. When women or men are in the minority they tend to feel vulnerable and more self-conscious, which decreases the attractiveness of the industry or organisation. Not quite Dream Employer territory!"

Dr Morley says "this finding echoes long standing research that shows that women are more likely to define career success in terms of intrinsic rewards such as personal achievements, professional development and the achievement of work/life balance, while men are more likely to define career success in terms of higher salaries, promotion and achievement of status symbols."

Women dream about getting away. According to executive producer on Getaway John Walsh, "The romantic notion of travelling for a living conjures up a dream situation for potential employees."

But for Getaway presenter Catriona Rowntree it really is just a different type of office.

"The camaraderie that exists between [everyone involved in the show] is most important. Work colleagues are not always going to get along, however strong leadership and respect for authority is paramount.

"Regardless of whether it is an office environment or shooting a story from some exotic destination on the other side of the world - when all these parts come together, I think the business and its people are headed for success."

"Since becoming a mum, I'll admit travelling pulls just that little bit more on my heartstrings, but that tug has always been there. Trips are now a lot shorter, but just as wonderful and above all very much appreciated."

The Importance of gender balance in the workplace. Insync Surveys chairman and co-founder of Gender Worx Nicholas Barnett, says "there is extensive research showing that greater gender balance leads to a more engaged workforce, higher productivity and profitability."

"Workplace cultures that are overly male dominated will have greater difficulty in retaining experienced and competent women, and consequently lose out on increased business gains.

"Organisations therefore need to understand and cater to the needs of both sexes for maximum benefit, and we can see this at work through the data with the twelfth placed police force attracting 54 per cent of votes from females and 46 per cent from males."

And the demographic insights don't end at gender, with the different generations offering insights not so much around who their Dream Employer is, but why.

The generation gap. When asked what dictated their choice of a Dream Employer, Generation Y prioritised 'culture'; Generation X was all about 'work-life balance'; and the Baby Boomers are looking for 'pay, benefits and conditions' to help build up that nest egg in preparation for retirement.

RedBalloon founding director Naomi Simson employs a team of fifty spanning generations X and Y in a workplace that has received multiple awards for its employee culture. According to Ms Simson, it doesn't matter what gender or generation, all employees are looking for the same thing.

"I've found that more and more – no matter what age or gender – people have become generation 'why'. All employees want to know why they are doing something and what contribution they are making to the overall purpose."

"But this doesn't mean we should ignore life stages and how they dictate employment preferences and needs.

"We have a lot of Gen Y RedBalloons who have sought us out as a fun and vibrant workplace where they can have a good time while contributing to our company purpose," Ms Simson said.

“Similarly, we also employ a number of Gen Xs who are at the stage where they’re getting married and having children, so work/life balance rightly takes on a higher priority for them.

“And we are happy to offer flexible options such as part time hours and the opportunity to work from home so they can continue in their work, contribute and exercise their creative brains with their peers.”

The top 20 Dream Employers as voted by the public were Google, self employed, Virgin Group, Qantas, Apple, Microsoft, OMD, Walt Disney, BHP Billiton, Getaway, United Nations, police force, Vodafone, NASA, Rio Tinto, departments of defence, Commonwealth Bank, Cadbury, Facebook and Lonely Planet.

New to the list in 2011 are the police force, NASA, Rio Tinto, departments of defence, Cadbury and Facebook. Making way for these new additions are Sydney Water, Coca Cola, eBay, Salmat and ABC, who have all dropped from the top 20 this year.

Insync Surveys and RedBalloon are running a free webinar unpacking the results of the 2011 Dream Employers report with loads of advice and insights. To register or for more information visit <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/875692081>

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Notes to Editor The full 2011 Dream Employers Survey report is attached and can be viewed online here -

<http://www.insyncsurveys.com.au/resources/research/2011/09/dream-employers-2011-report> For further comment on the report, please see Media Q&A/Fact Sheet

Available for further comment Naomi Simson – founding director, RedBalloon Nick Barnett – chairman Insync Surveys, gender expert and co-founder of Gender Worx Karen Morley – gender expert and co-founder of Gender Worx

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