

MODERN WORK HR AWARD INSIGHT 2026

A report developed by Adecco
for SwissCham Singapore





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FOREWORD



Julie Raneda

President of
SwissCham Singapore

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, one question stands out for leaders across industries: Are we keeping pace with the future of work?

At SwissCham Singapore, we see this as an ongoing journey. The SwissCham Modern Work HR Awards were created to recognise organisations that are not only adapting to changes, but actively shaping the future of work through meaningful and integrated transformation.

This initiative goes beyond recognition. It provides a platform to share leading practices, foster cross-industry dialogue, and equip organisations with practical insights to navigate change with confidence.

Last year's findings highlight a clear shift. Excellence is no longer defined by the adoption of new tools or policies, but by how deeply these are embedded into everyday operations. The most forward-looking organisations are those that align workforce, ways of working, and workplace design into a coherent and future-ready model.

Artificial intelligence is accelerating this transformation, creating both opportunities and new challenges around governance, trust, and skills. At the same time, the move towards skills-based organisations, combined with a stronger focus on inclusion, well-being, and sustainability, is redefining what it means to build resilient and high-performing teams.

Through this report, we aim to provide a clear perspective on what matters most today and what leaders should prioritise next.

On behalf of SwissCham Singapore, I would like to thank all participating organisations and partners for their contributions. Your insights are what enable our community to learn, evolve, and lead together.

Julie Raneda
President of SwissCham Singapore

REFLECTIONS



Andrea Cheng

People & Skills
Committee Chair

I would like to warmly welcome you to this year's Modern Work HR Award. As Chair of the People & Skills Committee of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce, I have been provided with a unique vantage point from which to observe the evolution of HR practices across our member organisations. Year to year, I have seen organisations leverage the SwissCham community not only as a network, but as a catalyst for growth and innovation.

Celebrating the Future of Work

The Modern Work HR Award goes beyond simply acknowledging excellence in human capital management; it celebrates organisations that are shaping the future of work through innovation, leadership and a bold commitment to people development.

Perhaps most importantly, I have observed how our community equips organisations to navigate challenges more effectively. Through the exchange of adaptive techniques that keep businesses resilient, organisations at SwissCham leverage their business excellence as they face challenges with increasing confidence.

The progression I have witnessed from the 2024 Modern Work HR Award to the now upcoming 2026 Award is something we can all be proud of. From 32 submissions in 2024, to 40 in 2025, we have watched participation grow, reflecting the real success of the award. Observing its growth each year, in both participation and the diversity of submissions, has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my role.

Spotlight on Innovation: Adecco Singapore

One example that stood out to me in particular is Adecco Singapore, winner of 2025's "WorkForce Pillar". Their submission exemplified the ability to grow in the face of difficulty. They impressed the jury by critically examining their own WorkForce Challenge, namely that their previous "traditional hiring and development models often overemphasise academic credentials and linear career paths" which can consequently result in "inadvertently limiting agility, diversity and productivity".

Reflections by our People & Skills Committee Chair

In 2025, in response to this challenge, they applied a strong, forward-thinking approach through the use of an internal talent marketplace, built on a global repository of skills data, across APAC, the USA, Europe, and including their own skills data. Their initiative involved creating a skills-first framework for their hiring, screening and how they implement assessments in the workforce. The marketplace additionally allows employees to take on stretch assignments matched to their existing skills, or listed desired areas of growth. This allows Adecco to better track, develop and retain their current talent, and source diversified talent by focusing on individuals' skills, rather than solely education and career accreditations.

By focusing on capability rather than credentials alone, they demonstrated how organisations can use innovation not only to improve business outcomes, but also to create a more inclusive and adaptable workforce.

A Broader Challenge Across Industries

What I believe makes this example so powerful is that it reflects a challenge facing organisations in all industries. As businesses across Singapore experience rapid change, Adecco reminds us that although these developments can offer extraordinary outcomes for productivity and growth, they also require organisations to rethink their current solutions to better support people development. Adecco additionally exemplifies the important reminder that the future of HR solutions does not happen to organisations, they are rather actively shaped through courageous leadership, innovative thinking and a commitment to developing people.

Adecco's story, however, is not unique. In many ways, it reflects the broader challenge facing organisations today. During a time of uncertainty with the development of technological advancement and the adoption of artificial intelligence, organisations are navigating unprecedented change. These developments have transformed the workplace, driving remarkable gains in efficiency, productivity and innovation. The emergence of AI, however, has also introduced new challenges that require thoughtful leadership and adaptation.

Singapore's Forward-Looking Approach

Singapore has demonstrated strong leadership in this area through initiatives designed to promote lifelong learning, workforce resilience and skills redevelopment. Singapore's Economic Strategy Review Committee (ESR) is focused on assessing where artificial intelligence can help the economy grow and create good jobs, not simply replace labour ([Gov.sg](https://gov.sg)).

Additionally, the Tripartite Jobs Council (TJC) has been formed by the Singaporean Government, employers, and unions in Singapore. It focuses on four priority areas: "Supporting responsible AI adoption, Driving job redesign, Strengthening skills training and Raising awareness of available worker support" ([Gov.sg](https://gov.sg)). This initiative invests in upskilling and reskilling programmes, and helps individuals and businesses remain competitive and adaptable in an increasingly technology-driven environment. We strongly resonate with this initiative as our organisations navigate an increasingly rapid pace of change.

Reflections by our People & Skills Committee Chair

The Modern HR Award provides a unique platform for businesses to share how they achieve their goals, overcome challenges, and adapt with resilience in an environment shaped by constant technological advancement. At SwissCham, we strongly support this forward-looking approach. We believe that embracing innovation must go hand in hand with investing in people.

Award Growth and Participation

The growing impact of the Modern Work HR Award reflects our commitment. In 2024, we received 32 submissions across 10 different industries, and in 2025, we received 40 submissions across 10 industries. The list of organisations has increasingly featured a strong focus on technology, healthcare, and consulting, with a significant presence in biotechnology, IT services and industrial manufacturing. Now in its third year, we will be expecting an even greater emphasis on digital transformation, innovation and high-tech solutions. I was beyond inspired reading the applications.

Our jury evaluates each submission using a comprehensive Innovation Assessment Criteria, which constitutes the basis for selecting the award winners. In 2025, participants were assessed across five key criteria: Employee Impact, Alignment with Modern Work Trends, Innovation, Uniqueness of innovation and finally, Scalability and Flexibility.

Looking Ahead to 2026

As you submit your own application for the 2026 Award, I encourage you to reflect on how your own organisation is driving progress in these areas. I am inspired to read about how your initiatives, people and ideas are shaping the future of work in Singapore.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our 2024 and 2025 jury members, Annie Lim, Ian Lee, Yin Ying Yeoh, Mario Jacober, Ivy Oh, Jek Min Tan, Michael Jenkins, and Paul Coignec. Thank you for your valuable work. Thank you again to NACE for being our outstanding knowledge partner, and to the members of the European Chambers, I appreciate your persistent hard work and valuable collaboration with us. I cannot thank the board members of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and the incredible office team enough for their generous commitment and unwavering, substantial support that has driven the Modern Work HR Award to what it is today. Together, we have created a meaningful, lasting impact, and I am confident that in the years ahead, more Chambers and HR-focused organisations will join us in participating in the Modern Work HR Award.

I am delighted to present this year's edition and look forward to recognising the organisations and leaders driving the future of work.

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Andrea Cheng,
Chair of People & Skills Committee

INTRODUCTION

The SwissCham Modern Work HR Awards set the benchmark for how leading organisations are redefining work—integrating workforce, workday, and workplace into cohesive, future-ready operating models.



WORK FORCE

Initiatives focused on talent, skills development, and enhancing the overall employee experience

WORK DAY

Technology-enabled ways of working, including AI adoption, automation, and digital transformation

WORK PLACE

Organizational governance, policies, culture, and day-to-day workplace practices

As a global leader in workforce, talent, and technology solutions, we have drawn on our experience and market insights to identify what truly sets top organisations apart. In this report, we distil the most critical learnings across all categories—and go a step further to provide clear, practical recommendations on where to focus to elevate your approach and stand out.

WORKFORCE INSIGHT

Move from Digital Adoption to Intelligent, AI-Driven Operations

To truly stand out, organisations must move beyond the adoption of digital tools and instead embed intelligence into the fabric of how work gets done. Leading companies are integrating AI-powered analytics, real-time dashboards, and automation directly into core workflows, transforming digital capabilities from standalone enablers into interconnected systems that continuously inform and optimise decisions. This allows organisations to shift from reactive processes to faster, more precise, and proactive decision-making, where insights are surfaced in real time and embedded directly into day-to-day operations. As a result, work becomes not just digitised, but intelligently orchestrated across functions.

The use of generative AI, skills mapping, and predictive insights is no longer experimental; it is quickly becoming a baseline expectation. What differentiates top performers is how effectively these tools are operationalised at scale—translating data into timely, actionable interventions. Advanced organisations are using these capabilities to anticipate workforce needs, identify capability gaps early, and dynamically adapt to changing business demands. At the same time, they are leveraging AI to personalise employee experiences, from tailored development pathways to targeted engagement strategies. This shift enables organisations to move from broad-based initiatives to precision-led actions, driving stronger workforce outcomes and sustained competitive advantage.



WORKFORCE INSIGHT

Case study: Tetra Pak

Tetra Pak Singapore's (2025 Winners) approach demonstrates that workforce transformation is about more than technology. Guided by its People First philosophy, the organisation combines AI-enabled insights with continuous learning, inclusion, emotional intelligence, and employee co-creation.



By embedding these principles into everyday ways of working, Tetra Pak is helping to create a future-ready workforce where both people and business can grow together.

WORKDAY INSIGHT

Design for Inclusion, Well-being, and Sustainability—by Default

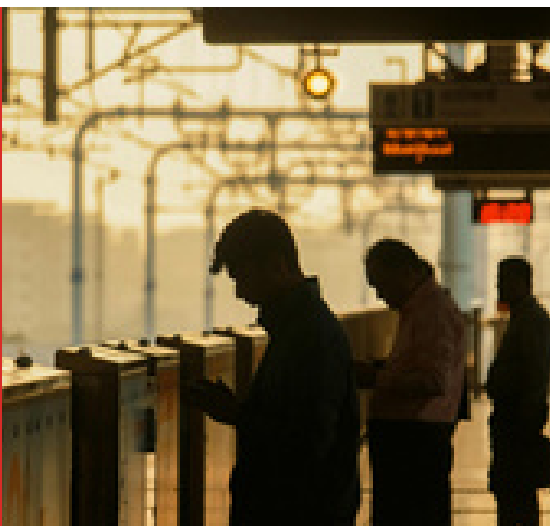
Organisations must move beyond broad, policy-led approaches and intentionally design workplace experiences that are inclusive, supportive, and purpose-driven from the ground up. This requires shifting from generic diversity and inclusion efforts to more targeted, data-informed strategies—such as enabling neurodiversity inclusion, accommodating different work styles, and tailoring programmes to the distinct needs of varied workforce segments. Leading organisations are embedding inclusion directly into workplace design, leadership behaviours, and day-to-day practices, ensuring that equity and belonging are experienced consistently rather than addressed through standalone initiatives.

At the same time, well-being and sustainability are becoming foundational, not optional. Forward-looking organisations are structurally embedding well-being through formalised leave policies, flexible work arrangements, and accessible digital mental health support, integrating these into core employee value propositions rather than treating them as peripheral benefits. In parallel, sustainability is being woven into everyday workplace practices—from operations and facilities to employee engagement—reinforcing organisational purpose and aligning with rising expectations around environmental and social responsibility. Together, these shifts enable organisations to create workplaces that are not only more inclusive and resilient, but also more aligned with long-term workforce and societal outcomes.

WORKDAY INSIGHT

Case study: Roche

Roche (2025 winner) exemplifies how organisations can embed inclusion, well-being, and sustainability into the employee experience. The company cultivates an inclusive and continuous-learning culture through programmes such as Career Days, Learning Conferences, and Employee Interest Groups, which create opportunities for employees to connect, develop, and contribute regardless of their role.



Beyond such programmes, Roche reinforces its commitment to sustainability through its office environment, which incorporates modern sustainable design and wellness-focused spaces. Together, these efforts demonstrate how inclusion, employee well-being, and sustainability can be integrated into everyday workplace practices.

WORKPLACE INSIGHT

Build a Skills-First, AI-Enabled Talent Strategy

To remain competitive, organisations must move beyond broad, programmatic learning initiatives and adopt a more deliberate, skills-first approach to workforce development. This requires reorienting talent strategies around critical capabilities rather than roles, with a clear line of sight between skills, business priorities, and future growth areas. Leading organisations are leveraging AI to identify evolving skills gaps, map adjacent capabilities, and dynamically align talent supply with demand. In doing so, they are transforming workforce planning from a static, periodic exercise into a continuous, data-driven process that enables faster, more targeted interventions.

At the same time, AI is enabling more personalised and scalable approaches to development—tailoring learning pathways, surfacing relevant opportunities, and accelerating upskilling and reskilling in line with individual and organisational needs. However, the true differentiator lies in how effectively these capabilities are embedded into everyday talent decisions, from hiring and deployment to progression and mobility. Forward-looking organisations are building workforces that are agile, adaptable, and continuously evolving, ensuring that skills development is not only continuous, but also precise, measurable, and tightly linked to business outcomes. This shift allows organisations to move beyond volume-based training to targeted capability-building that drives sustained performance and resilience.

WORKPLACE INSIGHT

Case study: Adecco Personnel Pte Ltd

The Adecco logo is displayed in a bold, red, sans-serif font. It is centered within a white rectangular box that has a subtle drop shadow, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

Adecco Personnel Pte Ltd (2025 winner) demonstrated that a modern workplace is built on culture and purpose. The company puts people first, creating a flexible, inclusive, and development-focused workplace. This includes flexible scheduling, remote work options, and the encouragement of self-care, ensuring that employees can tailor their work patterns to meet both professional goals and personal responsibilities.

A great example of the company's commitment to self-care and self-development is the "No Meeting Fridays" initiative, which encourages employees to use the afternoon for individual development and to recharge before the weekend.



GOING BEYOND

Integrate The Three Pillars into a Coherent Operating Model

The defining characteristic of high-performing organisations is not excellence in isolated areas, but seamless integration across the three Modern Workforce pillars—Workforce, Workday, and Workplace. Rather than operating independently, these pillars are orchestrated into a coherent operating model that aligns talent, ways of working, and the environment in which work takes place.

A leading example is Fairmont Singapore & Swissôtel The Stamford, they illustrate what true integration looks like in practice. The organisation did not treat Workforce, Workday, and Workplace as separate initiatives—instead, each decision reinforced the others to enable a single, coherent workforce strategy. It began by partnering with non-profit organisations to enable barrier-free recruitment and expand access to underserved talent (Workforce), then reinforced this through flexible work arrangements tailored to mature workers, caregivers, and parents—ensuring these hires could be retained and thrive (Workday). Crucially, digitalisation was deployed to complete the loop. RFID-enabled automation was introduced not to reduce headcount, but to redesign roles—reskilling fashion room staff into higher-value, digitally enabled work (Workplace).

In doing so, inclusive hiring, flexible work design, and job transformation were intentionally linked—showing how organisations can move beyond parallel initiatives to an integrated, human-centred workforce model. Companies will do well to create holistic and integrated strategies moving forward.

The Baseline for Excellence Has Shifted from Adoption to Embeddedness

Across the 2024–2025 award cohorts, excellence is increasingly defined not by the presence of progressive practices, but by their depth of integration into core operating models. Practices such as hybrid work, wellness programmes, e-learning, and flexible workplace design have moved from differentiators to baseline expectations, reflecting either genuine organisational maturation, evolving award standards, or both. Within this elevated baseline, differentiation is now driven by how systematically these capabilities are embedded into day-to-day operations. As you apply, the question is no longer whether these practices exist, but how deeply they are operationalised within the system.



1. How embedded is AI within your core operations?

In 2024, AI was primarily deployed for discrete, task-level support such as content generation, data processing, and administrative efficiency. By 2025, it is increasingly embedded within end-to-end workflows, enabling continuous monitoring, anomaly detection, and automated response. This is fundamental paradigm shift from seeing AI as a tool, to AI as a colleague.



The Baseline for Excellence Has Shifted from Adoption to Embeddedness



2. How embedded is skills-based thinking across the workforce system?

In 2024, skills-based hiring appeared as an aspiration in several submissions. In 2025, we see that more companies are moving towards skills-based hiring rather than academic qualifications.^[1] This shift matters strongly for companies. The Adecco Group's global research consistently identifies skills-based workforce planning as the most reliable predictor of organizational agility. Organizations that can deploy, redeploy, and develop talent based on capability rather than title are structurally better positioned for disruption. However, integration is still uneven: while hiring practices are often skills-informed, fewer organisations demonstrate full alignment across workforce planning, talent mobility, and career progression. The key differentiator is whether skills act as a guiding principle in one function or as the organising logic across the entire workforce system.

[1] <https://jobsandskills.skillsfuture.gov.sg/resources/SFJSI-Nov-2025.pdf>

The Baseline for Excellence Has Shifted from Adoption to Embeddedness



3. How embedded is inclusion within organisational design and daily work?

Neurodiversity appeared as a meaningful theme for the first time in 2025, with a few organizations referencing neurodiverse hiring. This reflects a global trajectory: the intersection of inclusion and workforce capability is being recognized as a competitive advantage, not just a social obligation.^[2] Organizations with deeply embedded inclusive cultures are twice as likely to meet or exceed financial targets and six times more likely to be innovative, as cognitive diversity reduces groupthink and sharpens problem-solving.



[2] <https://www.adecco.com/en-nz/news/what-is-neurodiversity-and-why-does-it-matter-for-employers>

GOING BEYOND

Organisations That Lead Responsibly Today Will Earn Workforce Trust Tomorrow

We are in the midst of one of the most significant technological shifts in recent decades. As AI reshapes how work is done, the differentiator is no longer adoption—but how responsibly and deliberately organisations integrate it. Those that lead with trust, transparency, and accountability today will be the ones employees choose to follow tomorrow.

RESPONSIBILITY 1

Build Human-Centric AI, Not Just Access to AI

Deploying AI tools is no longer a differentiator, but a baseline expectation. What separates high-performing organizations is the quality of the infrastructure surrounding those tools: governance frameworks, AI literacy programmes, accountability structures, and clear guidance on human-AI role boundaries.

The Adecco Group's Workforce Trends 2026 report states that organizations that thrive in the AI era are those that keep humanity at the center. This means equipping employees not just to use AI, but to interrogate it, override it when appropriate, and understand its limitations. Crucially, leadership must model this competence — yet current research indicates that only less than half of employees trust their leaders' understanding of AI, highlighting a significant gap that organizations must urgently address.^[3]

[3] <https://www.adeccogroup.com/our-thinking/articles-and-editorials/building-trust-at-work-in-age-of-ai>

RESPONSIBILITY

2

Rethinking Entry-Level Roles Is Both A Social Responsibility and An Operational Consideration

As AI increasingly absorbs routine administrative tasks—drafting, coordination, and data processing—organisations must rethink how they integrate emerging talent. This is not just a workforce design challenge, but a broader social responsibility. Entry-level roles have long served

as critical access points into the workforce; without redesigning them, organisations risk limiting opportunities for early-career talent and narrowing pathways into meaningful employment.

At the same time, this quickly becomes an operational liability. Organisations that fail to reinvent these roles are not just restricting access—they are weakening their own leadership pipeline. Without structured early-career development, the system that produces future managers begins to erode. Leading organisations are responding by redesigning entry-level roles around learning, exposure, and contribution—embedding critical thinking and cross-functional experience from the outset. This ensures they meet both their societal responsibility and sustain the talent engine that drives long-term performance.

RESPONSIBILITY

3

Make Inclusion and Wellbeing Measurable, Not Just Aspirational

Inclusion and wellbeing are now decisive factors in talent attraction and retention — but there is a persistent and growing gap between what organizations say and what employees actually experience. More than four in five workers globally say they would choose an employer committed to sustainability and social responsibility^[4], yet satisfaction with employers' societal

commitments ranks lowest across all workplace satisfaction metrics surveyed by the Adecco Group. The message is clear: workers are not questioning whether these values matter. They are questioning whether their employer genuinely lives it out.

To close this gap, inclusion and well-being must move from aspiration to measurable reality. In globally-exposed markets like Singapore, where DEI and well-being credentials directly influence the ability to attract globally mobile talent, organisations are expected to define clear KPIs, embed accountability, and ensure support is felt in everyday work—not just articulated in policy. Ultimately, it is the lived experience of inclusion and well-being that builds trust, strengthens psychological safety, and sustains high performance.

[4] https://www.adecco.com/-/media/project/adecco/adeccopl/08-reports/the_adecco_group_workforce_trends_2026_report.pdf

The future belongs to organisations that turn these principles into everyday practice

As you begin your application, this is an opportunity to take stock of how effectively you are embedding AI into everyday operations, building skills-first workforce strategies, and designing inclusive, sustainable workplaces—and how well you are integrating these into a coherent, responsible operating model. The future belongs to organisations that turn these principles into everyday practice.



Exemplar Modern Work Companies



ABOUT SWISSCHAM SINGAPORE

Bridging Swiss-Singapore Businesses

SwissCham Singapore is a non-profit organisation representing Swiss business interests in Singapore and fostering strong bilateral ties between Switzerland and Singapore.

Today, SwissCham brings together over 300 members, ranging from startups to large multinational corporations.

Members benefit from access to a dynamic business community, a diverse calendar of events, and valuable networking opportunities. SwissCham also supports its members with practical guidance on setting up and operating in Singapore, as well as broader local business matters.

ABOUT ADECCO SINGAPORE

Make work mean more

Adecco is a global workforce solutions company and part of The Adecco Group, headquartered in Switzerland. Established in Singapore since 1985, Adecco Singapore provides Permanent Placement, Flexible Placement, and Outsourcing solutions across Technology, Supply Chain and Logistics, Engineering, Banking and Financial Services, Corporate Functions, Sales & Marketing, Pharmaceuticals & Life Sciences, and Education. Combining global expertise with local market knowledge, we help organisations adapt to evolving workforce needs.