Majority of SA employees believe promotions are given unfairly - survey

Simon-pure Consulting have released the first findings of its *South African Company Culture Health Index* survey, which was launched in August 2019.

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Born of the boutique consultancy's belief that culture can make or break a business, the survey aims to generate insights into how healthy South Africa's companies are in terms of culture, and what can be done to improve employee engagement across industries.

"Several studies from respected international research and consulting houses show that engaged teams can deliver much better quality work, are more productive and generate more profit than their disengaged colleagues," says Elaine Porter, founder of Simon-pure, "but many businesses still struggle to shape their cultures toward better engagement.

"We wanted to understand what South African businesses are doing to build company culture and whether or not it's working."

## The factors that influence Company Culture Health

The survey is open to the public for participation, offering all South Africans an opportunity to share their workplace experiences in six categories:

1. **Quality of leadership** – which examines how organisational leaders perform across 20 key areas.
2. **Engagement** – which looks at the benefits and engagement experiences companies offer, and how much these initiatives matter to employees.
3. **Career development** – where respondents rated the quality of their career development or performance management experience with their employer and shared what they would most want to gain from these experiences.

4. **Collaboration** – in which respondents rated their experience with their colleagues, work environment and work processes.
5. **Consistency** – which examines whether the respondents' experiences at work align with their expectations.
6. **Creativity** – which looks at whether or not companies value creativity and innovation in the workplace.

These six categories make up much of the employee experience, and each offers opportunities for companies to improve engagement on an every-day basis. "A lot of responsibility for shaping company culture falls to the marketing or HR teams, and they do have a big part to play," says Porter.

"But other factors, like how leaders and managers behave, how colleagues treat one another, and the company's policies and processes have a big impact on one's experience at work. We wanted to examine all these factors to get a view of how they are playing a role in South African businesses."
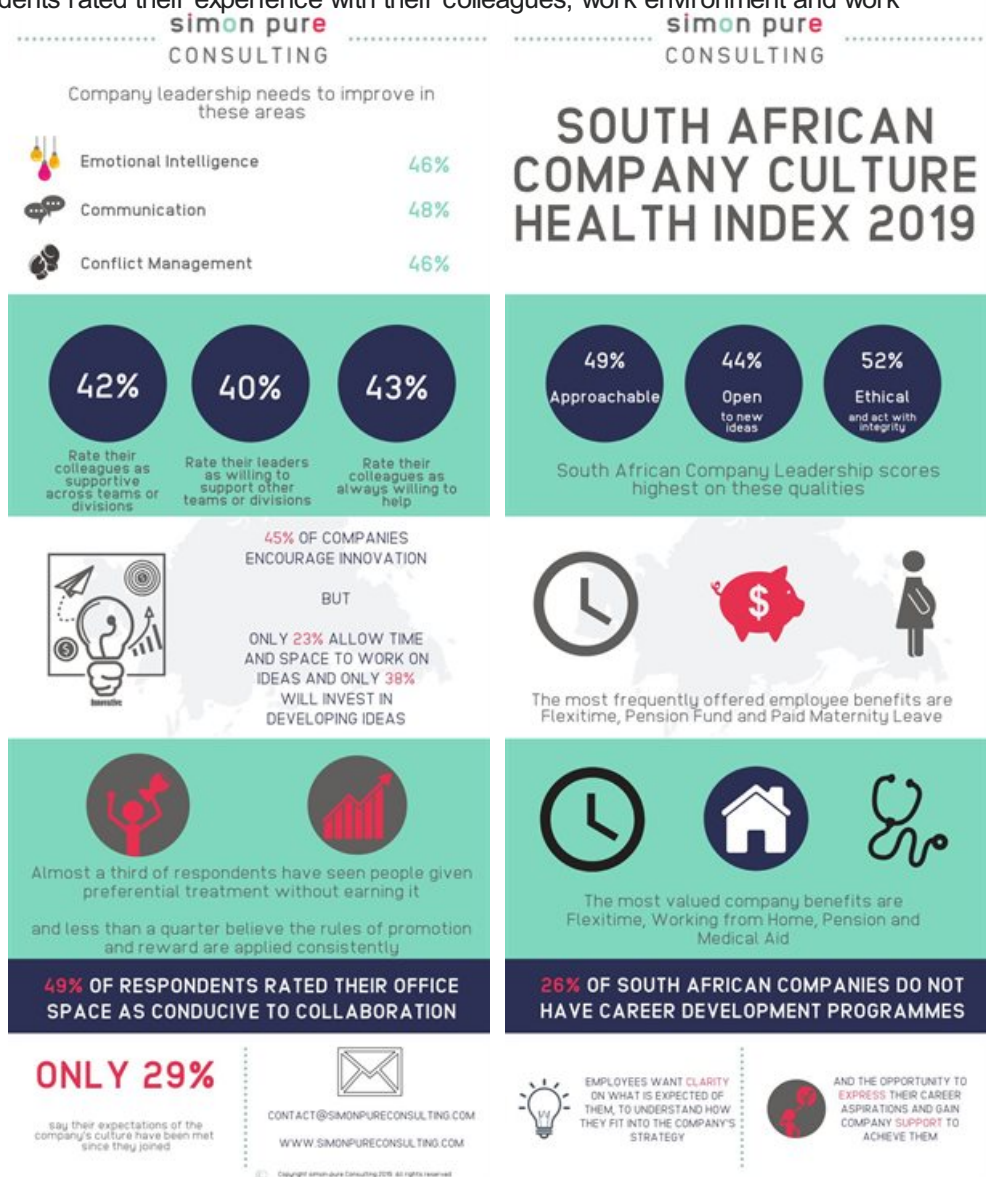
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The survey results

The results are enlightening. For example, while 45% of companies encourage employees to be innovative and put forward new ideas, only 23% allow time and space at work to actively develop ideas or innovations, and only 38% are willing to invest in developing new ideas.

"This may send mixed messages to employees," Porter cautions. "If they took the job because they expected an opportunity to bring creativity and innovation to the role, and then find themselves effectively hamstrung, they could quickly become disengaged."

Preferential treatment and inconsistency in giving recognition are another concern the survey highlights. Almost a third of respondents have seen people given preferential treatment without earning it, and less than 25% believe rewards and promotions are given fairly.

"There's nothing quite like perceptions of favouritism, unfair practice and selective application of the 'rules' to cause disgruntlement," Porter says. "75% is high and should be encouragement for any organisation to take a closer look at policies and processes around recognition, reward, and career advancement."

There may be some correlation to career development practices, though. 26% of employers do not have career development programmes in place for their employees. Without these, it is difficult for people to understand what is expected of them, get feedback on how they are performing against those expectations and indeed whether or not they

should expect rewards or promotions.

Meeting expectations

Lastly, and perhaps most worryingly, only 29% of respondents said their employers have met their expectations since they joined. This begs the question: what is being promised through branding, employer branding and during the recruitment process that the company cannot deliver?

"Marketing teams are tasked with making the company as attractive as possible to potential customers, and when they do their jobs well, potential hires are attracted to the employer if it resonates with their values.

"We believe that companies who put effort into aligning their company culture with what their brand promises to the market can attract and retain more engaged employees, and by extension see improvements in quality of work, productivity and profitability," Porter says.

The summary survey results, released officially today, indicate that while South African companies are paying attention to global trends and changes to how people, and especially knowledge workers, are treated many still have some work to do.

The Company Culture Health Index is an ongoing survey project and can be accessed on Simon-pure Consulting's website.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com