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Swiss HR-Barometer 2018

Focus
Integration and Discrimination

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

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Latest edition

This is the 10th edition of the Swiss Human-Relations Barometer (HR Barometer), which investigates the working conditions, employment relationships, work attitudes, and work behaviors of employees in Switzerland. This year's edition focuses on the topic «integration and discrimination of foreign employees in the working environment» and examines the influencing factors and effects of integration and discrimination experienced by employees with regard to their nationality, ethnic origin or faith.

Sample

The sample was taken from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office's sample frame. This year's survey was carried out from March to May 2018. The participants were given the choice to complete the survey online or using a paper questionnaire and could do so in either in German, French, Italian, Portuguese or English. In total, 1,947 responses from participants the German-, French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland were evaluated. Given the focus topic of this year's edition, a sample of exclusively foreign participants living in Switzerland was also taken in order to obtain a representative sample of foreign employees. All in all, 1,325 responses from foreign employees in the German-, French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland were collected and evaluated for the focus topic.

Focus: integration

In sum, the survey presents a positive picture: over 50% of the foreign employees surveyed feel fully integrated in their working environment. Only 17% of them feel partly or not integrated. Language difficulties are cited as one of the main reasons for low levels of perceived integration.

Focus: discrimination

The survey also gives a positive impression with regard to how foreign employees perceive discrimination in the workplace. The majority (86%) do not feel that they are discriminated against in their working environment – or at least not very much – on the grounds of nationality, ethnic origin or faith. Foreign employees most commonly experience discrimination during the application process or in relation to pay. Interestingly, foreigners feel that any discrimination towards them tends to come particularly from customers rather than from their employers. Perceived discrimination does not seem to bear any relation to the size and structure of the organisation and the level is particularly low in situations where a psychological contract has been fulfilled, the working climate is conducive to integration and there is a good relationship between supervisors and staff.

Focus: effects of integration and discrimination

Perceptions of integration and discrimination have an impact on attitudes to work and work behaviors amongst foreign employees. If foreign employees feel well integrated, this enhances their job satisfaction and level of commit-

ment towards their employer. On the flip side, experiences of discrimination lower individuals' assessments of their own employability, reduce their job security and make them more likely to give notice. Discrimination based on nationality, ethnic origin or faith also causes those affected to feel increased levels of stress.

Focus:
integration climate

The integration climate in the workplace is crucial for the integration of foreign employees and the prevention of discrimination within companies. Establishing a good integration climate is therefore an important objective for human resources management. Businesses with a strong climate of integration place a lot of emphasis on fair HR management measures, openness towards people from different backgrounds and incorporating various points of view in decision-making processes. Around a third of foreign employees rate the integration climate in their companies as medium. This indicates that there is significant potential for improving the integrative climate in organisations in Switzerland. Targeted integration measures such as training programmes, events designed to encourage people to get to know one another or company policies that promote open communication have a positive impact on the integration climate experienced by employees.

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Trend:
career orientations

As in previous years, there are four distinct career types in Switzerland: traditional promotion-oriented and loyalty-oriented career orientations exist alongside «new» independent and disengaged types. Traditional career orientations continue to make up the vast majority. One third of employees are following a traditional promotion-oriented path and another third have a traditional-loyalty career orientation. This year, the traditional-loyalty career type is more strongly represented than in previous years. A growing sense of job insecurity seems to be prompting employees to seek more stability and security.

Trend:
human resource management

Employees in Switzerland give a positive assessment of the way their work is structured (in terms of the skill variety, task identity, task significance, the level of feedback and autonomy) and, except with regard to feedback, the figures show a slight upward trend across the board.

In terms of performance management, the survey indicates that regular performance appraisals are still only being offered to just under half of all employees. At the same time, around a third are not being given any opportunity for professional development in the context of formal training. In this respect, action is needed in both these HRM practices.

Companies also ought to pay attention to the results of the trend analysis on the topic of leadership and participation. In particular, participation has achieved its lowest rating amongst employees in Switzerland since the survey began.

On the subject of pay, there is no evidence of any major changes compared to previous years. What is surprising is that only a small proportion (16%) of those surveyed receive a performance-related component in addition to their

fixed salary. Performance-related pay therefore appears to be less widespread than generally thought based on current discussions.

Trend:
psychological contract

There has been a high degree of stability in the content of psychological contracts since 2012. What employees in Switzerland expect from their employers is therefore consistent and predictable. The issue of appropriate pay remains the source of the biggest discrepancy with regard to the benefits actually received from employers. This discrepancy is also enhanced by the fact that the pay offered by employers has once again achieved a poorer rating than in the previous survey. Employers may be able to counter this negative trend by ensuring more pay transparency.

Trend:
job insecurity

This year, job insecurity has reached its highest point since the survey began. Employees in the «Transport and communication», «Real estate, renting, IT, research and development» and «Manufacturing» sectors in particular have shown a relatively sharp rise in insecurity at work. More needs to be invested in employability, especially in these industries, so that employees are equipped for the possibility of losing their job.

Trend:
**job satisfaction, commitment
and turnover intention**

Job and career satisfaction amongst employees in Switzerland is at a consistently high level. Compared to the surveys carried out over the last few years, there has been an increase in progressive satisfaction – where employees consider their wishes and expectations to have been fulfilled and raise their expectations at the same time. On the other hand, levels of resigned satisfaction and fixed dissatisfaction – which are characterised by unfulfilled expectations – have fallen slightly. Employee commitment is still following a slight upward trend, which is an indicator of staff loyalty. The turnover intention of employees in Switzerland remains relatively low, though this has also increased marginally this year.

Conclusions

Employees in Switzerland have been surveyed about their work situation for the tenth time. As in previous years, the results reveal a fundamentally positive yet diverse picture. When it comes to general trends, it is particularly striking to note that job insecurity has risen once again, reaching its highest level since the survey began. Overall, the findings relating to the main focus of this year's survey are encouraging. Most foreign employees do not experience much discrimination and feel integrated in their working environment. In terms of the effects of integration and discrimination, however, it is clear that these are not just two sides of the same coin. While discrimination primarily concerns unjustified unequal treatment, integration not only implies equal opportunities, but also a sense of belonging.

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